Semi-Tropical America:

Popular Imagery and the Selling of California and Florida, 1869-1919

Henry Knight

Doctorate of Philosophy

University of Sussex

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

University of Sussex
Henry Knight, Doctorate of Philosophy

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Summary

This thesis examines the promotion of California and Florida from 1869 to 1919, a period when both states were transformed from remote, under-populated locales into two of the most publicised states in America. Using an interdisciplinary approach which analyses cultural representations of the states within a broader socioeconomic context, the thesis traces how railroad and land companies, agriculturists, chambers of commerce, state agencies, and journalists fashioned new identities for California and Florida as Semi-Tropical American lands. As their boosters competed in a bid to attract settlers, tourists, and investors, they played upon republican and colonialist discourses within American society and expansion. Evoking ideas about race, climate, and environment, promoters depicted California and Florida as parts of a benign middle zone between an increasingly urban-industrial North and socially "primitive" tropics. At a time of traumatic industrial change, California and Florida promised American rebirth in nature, through renewing health and leisure, prosperous agriculture, and superior cities. The selling visions were created by and for white Americans, however, and focused on the "semi-tropical" benefits for Anglo visitors and residents. Ethnic and racial minorities were marginalised as romantic, unprogressive peoples who were best suited to manual labour roles which reinforced Anglo-American progress. The thesis thus argues that boosters alloyed republican ideals of independent living to processes of racial hierarchy, creating a seductive, expansionist imagery which sold semi-tropical California and Florida.

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Glossary of Archive Abbreviations

BL – Bancroft Library Special Collections (Berkeley, California)

BrL – British Library Special Collections (London, England)

CHS – California Historical Society Special Collections (San Francisco, California)

CSL – California State Library Special Collections (Sacramento, California)

FAU – Florida Atlantic University Library Special Collections (Boca Raton, Florida)

FIU – Florida International University Library Special Collections (Miami, Florida)

FSU – Florida State University Library Special Collections (Tallahassee, Florida)

HMSF – Historical Museum of Southern Florida Collections (Miami, Florida)

LC – Library of Congress (Washington, D.C.)

SFPL – San Francisco Public Library Special Collections (San Francisco, California)

UCF – University of Central Florida Library Special Collections (Orlando, Florida)

UCLA – University of California, Los Angeles Library Special Collections (Los Angeles, California)

UCSD – University of California, San Diego Library Special Collections (San Diego, California)

UF – University of Florida Library Special Collections (Gainesville, Florida)

UM – University of Miami Library Special Collections (Miami, Florida)

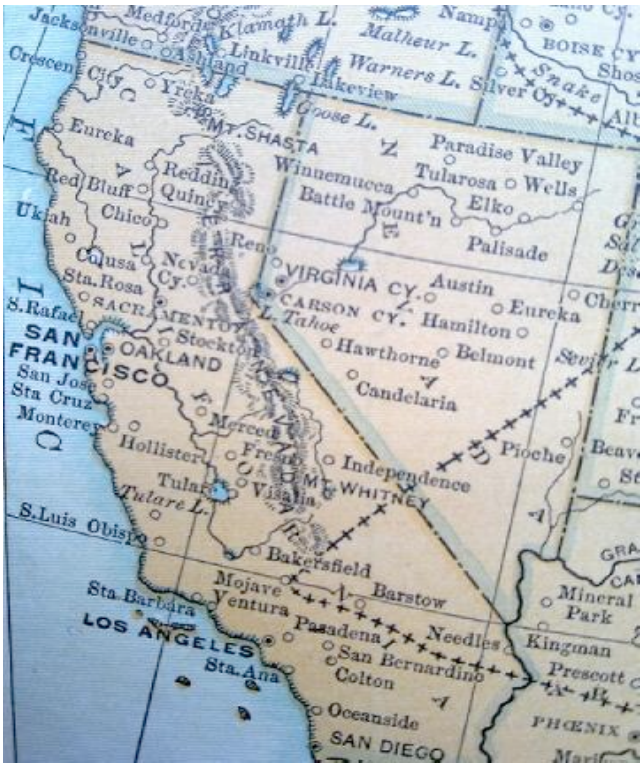
UNF – University of North Florida Library Special Collections (Jacksonville, Florida)

USF – University of South Florida Library Special Collections (Tampa, Florida)

UT – University of Texas Library Special Collections (Austin, Texas)

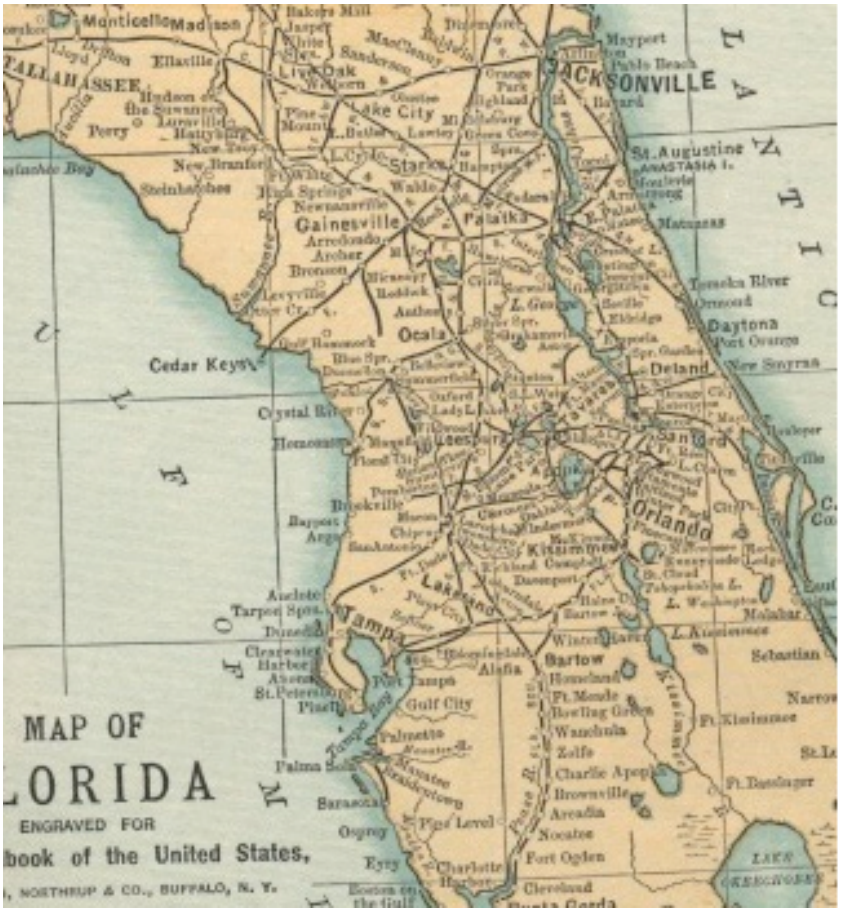
UWF – University of West Florida Library Special Collections (Pensacola, Florida)

Fig. 0.1 – Maps of California and Southern California (*King's Handbook of the United States*, 1892)[1]



[1] *King's Handbook of the United States* (New York: The Matthews-Northrup Co., 1892), pp. 8, 465.

Fig. 0.2 – Maps of Florida and Central Florida (*King's Handbook of the United States*, 1892)[2]



[2] *King's Handbook of the United States* (New York: The Matthews-Northrup Co., 1892), pp. 8, 469.

Introduction

> "There is no portion of the United States which presents so interesting a study as that known as the semi-tropical States. In semi-tropic North America is to be found a diversity of climate, of products, of people and of customs, which is unknown to any other portion of the habitable globe. In view of the fact that semi-tropic California and the semi-tropic States fringing the Gulf of Mexico are soon to be connected by direct rail communication, a cursory view of the prominent similarities and of the salient differences of these parts of our great country may not be uninteresting to the readers of the Times. In many respects they could not be more different if an ocean separated, instead of two great oceans inclosing them. Again, in many other respects, their similarities are so great as to strike one with the likeness…Florida more than any other of these resembles Southern California."
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> – "Semi-Tropic America", *Los Angeles Times* (1882)[3]

In the decades after the American Civil War, promoters of California and Florida created new images of those states which emphasised their "semi-tropical" qualities. California and Florida were not the only American states to be viewed this way: Texas and Louisiana, in particular, were also subject to tropical comparisons by boosters and writers.[4] A travel journalist writing in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1882 referred to all the Gulf States from

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[3] "Semi-Tropic America", *Los Angeles Times* (August 13, 1882), p. 3.

[4] See, for example, *Falfurrias, 'the Land of Heart's Delight', in Semi-Tropical South Texas* (Falfurrias: Falfurrias Immigration Company, 190?). Daniel Dennett, *Louisiana as it is: Its Topography and Material Resources* (New Orleans: Eureka Press, 1876). For clarity, I use "America" to refer to the United States of America, while acknowledging that the term is equally applicable to the entire western hemisphere.

Louisiana to Florida as being, along with California, the constituents of what he called "Semi-Tropic America".[5] By some margin, however, California and Florida were the states where the use of "semi-tropical" as a promotional and representational term was most widespread. References proliferated in the titles of immigration pamphlets, horticultural periodicals, and land companies, as well as countless magazine articles, state guidebooks, and exhibitions: visitors to Florida in 1888 could have attended the state's Sub-Tropical Exposition in Jacksonville, while San Diego's Panama-California Exposition in 1915 prompted the publication of *Semi-Tropic California*, a book which aimed to confirm "that here on the eastern shores of the Pacific Ocean is today the garden spot of the world".[6] Using an array of promotional texts aimed at settlers, tourists, and investors, this thesis analyses the selling of California and Florida as the leading states of Semi-Tropical America.

My focus is "outward-in," approaching California and Florida via the ideals, plans, and anxieties of Americans who promoted the states. The accuracy of the booster

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[5] "Semi-Tropic America", *Los Angeles Times*, p. 3.

[6] Quotation from F. Weber Benton, *Semi-Tropic California: the Garden of the World* (Los Angeles: Benton, 1914), p. 1 [CSL]. For some examples of the titular use of "semi-tropical" in California promotion, see Major Benjamin C. Truman, *Semi-Tropical California: Its Climate, Healthfulness, Productiveness, and Scenery* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company, 1874) [CSL]; *Semi-Tropic California*, a periodical "devoted to Agriculture, Horticulture, and the Development of Southern California", which ran from 1879 to 1883 [BL]; *Semi-Tropic California – Citrus Fruit Area of the State* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1902) [CSL]; for Florida, see Seth French [State Commissioner of Immigration], *Semi-tropical Florida: Its Climate, Soil, and Productions* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1879) [UWF]; *Semi-Tropical*, a monthly magazine "devoted to Southern Agriculture, Horticulture, and to Immigration" which ran from 1875 to 1877; *Florida, Sub-Tropical Exposition* (Jacksonville: Sub-Tropical Exposition, 1888) [Both UF].

representations is not at issue; rather, I argue that boosterism articulated and influenced discourses of race, environment, and expansion in American society. The booster constructions were not mere images divorced from real life, however. On the contrary, they contributed to local developments by supporting infrastructure, tourism, agriculture, and urbanisation. My approach is interdisciplinary in that it focuses on cultural representations which were fundamental to material processes of social and economic development in California and Florida. However, the thesis interprets the promotional imagery primarily in terms of booster efforts to recast the two states, through a wealth of literature which bid to attract white Americans by converting intimidating, exotic lands into desirable, semi-tropical destinations.

Between the Civil War and World War I, these semi-tropical representations played a critical role in changing popular conceptions of California and Florida. In 1869, when the first transnational railroad was completed, remote and under-populated Southern California was dismissed by Easterners as part of the Great American Desert and by many Northern Californians as the "cow counties," on account of the vast cattle ranchos which had covered the region since before the American conquest. The violent vestiges of mining also influenced Eastern perceptions of California. As one migrant to San Francisco informed the California Immigrant Union, the state was often "looked upon as a place lawless in the extreme, without any security for life or property – without any civilised institutions;…*in fact, it is believed to be a place as much to be shunned and avoided as the deserts of Africa*, and about as soon to be thought of with any view to settlement and a future home."[7] That

[7] Emphasis in original: Caspar Hopkins, *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question* (San Francisco: California Immigrant Union, 1869), p. 3 [SFPL].

same year, Florida faced its own obstacles as an ex-Confederate state which had just been readmitted to the Union with congressional representation. Although geographically closer to the Northeast, the peninsula suffered from sectional animosity while also being viewed as a swampy "waste" land. As travel writer George Canning Hill wrote in 1888, "Of Florida the people of…the North really knew nothing until long after the close of the war of the sections. To the most of us it was as a forbidden land. In the common imagination it was associated with the Everglades and…[the] bloody fight with the Seminoles; with swamps and marshes and cane brakes," a wilderness of alligators, "ever moist lowlands," and "heavy with the poisons of malaria."[8] The Southwestern and Southeastern corners of the republic, California and Florida, thus, appeared foreign, if not "forbidden," zones in American eyes.

In the following decades, however, the two states underwent major transformations, becoming leading destinations for American tourists, settlers, and investors; in the 1920s, Southern California and South Florida were undisputed centres of national interest and the sites of real estate booms. This thesis argues that, and explains how, representations of California and Florida as "semi-tropical" lands infused and fed into these transformations. Boosters devised and disseminated semi-tropical images of the states in order to convert "foreign" environmental qualities into enticements for Anglo-Americans, including those who were alienated by the social and economic changes of Gilded Age and Progressive Era America. National tropes concerning imperiled notions of American society, identity and expansion were projected on to California and Florida and coloured their promotional imagery. The two states became repositories for both optimistic and exclusionary ideas of

[8] George Canning Hill, "Florida for the Winter", *New England Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (March 1888), p. 210.

American renewal and rebirth which clustered around two central themes: health-restoring leisure and rewarding labour. Romanticising and marginalising ethnic and racial minorities in the states, boosters sold California and Florida as unique lands which would enable the formation of new reinvigorated Anglo-American societies.

By promotional imagery, I refer to a broad range of sources – including land, immigration, and tourist pamphlets, travel guides, exposition exhibits, regional magazines and newspapers, and advertisements – in which California and Florida were packaged and sold. I have collated an extensive range of ephemera and booster texts from archives including the California State Library (Sacramento) and the University of Florida Special Collections (Gainesville). These and other collections were chosen for the diversity and richness of their holdings in promotional ephemera, from railroad and hotel pamphlets to state immigration guides and horticultural periodicals. Much of this material has been overlooked or inadequately examined by historians, and has never been studied in a comparative framework. My initial goal was a broader comparison of California and Florida boosterism, which took for granted their similarities in climate, agriculture, and tourism. Undertaking the research, however, I discovered the prominent and concurrent "semi-tropical" representations of the two states. Intrigued by these visions and how they functioned in a promotional capacity, I focused on this aspect. Although by no means the only model which boosters applied – Northern California and panhandle Florida, in particular, were less often referred to in these terms – the semi-tropical imagery became pervasive in the promotion of Southern California and peninsular Florida. It merits further investigation as an unexamined paradigm through which Americans perceived and propelled the settlement and development of the two states.

By boosters, I refer to a group of writers, journalists, businessmen, entrepreneurs, and others, who wrote about California or Florida with promotional motivations. Biographical information is provided for some but not all of these promoters, not least because many of the texts were anonymous; a writer's identity is not necessarily relevant, however, given that texts articulated widely-held beliefs which were deployed in order to sell land, attract tourists, or raise a city's profile. For the sake of concision, I use terms like "California boosters" and "Florida promoters"; this does not mean that all of them agreed on all issues, but that they held majority and representative positions. Although individually they differed in style and emphasis, promoters echoed and repeated one another, producing a chorus effect in the literature. Internal rivalries – for example, between Los Angeles and San Diego or Florida's Gulf and Atlantic coasts – are discussed only briefly as these did not greatly affect the semi-tropical visions of the states. Potentially divisive subjects like partisan politics, meanwhile, were hardly mentioned at all (with the partial exception of Reconstruction in Florida) – a silence which speaks volumes for the desire for social harmony and stability in the booster visions – and thus make scant appearance in the thesis. Shared themes and overarching myths far outweighed differences in the promotional imagery.

The content, limitations, and values of booster texts and images define the character of this study. These sources were all, in a general sense, advertisements. Some were literally so – for example, pamphlets published by land companies to attract prospective settlers – whereas magazine articles and travel books were more oblique, their advertising functions absorbed within journalistic descriptions of places and peoples. The key methodological issues are nonetheless consistent. Promoters were inevitably biased in their creation of enticing representations, selling hopes and ideals in the service of vested

interests, and often at the expense of awkward realities.[9] As Raymond Mohl has noted of Miami's booster imagery, "The problem for historians…is that imagery and symbolism only partially represent reality, or perhaps even distort reality considerably."[10] Writing about New South promotional literature, C. Vann Woodward put it more bluntly: "The historian, like the purchaser, should observe the most ancient rule of the market place, *caveat emptor*."[11] Although such wariness is undeniably warranted, the value of promotional texts as historical sources should not be underestimated. The myths and themes deemed popular and persuasive enough to be evoked by state promoters are instructive of mainstream ideals relating to a more desirable life and society. As Roland Marchand has written about product advertisements, they "actually surpass most other recorded communications as a basis for *plausible inference* about popular attitudes and values".[12] As with advertisements (and other kinds of written or pictorial sources), the reception of this material is hard to gauge. Where available I have tried to include publication figures or commentary, but these hardly provide guarantees of the consequences of a particular text. Advertisers can run misguided campaigns and a promotional piece did not necessarily influence its audience, as the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce noted of its own promotional activities: "It is to be admitted…that a large part of the work has been in the nature of advertising the country, of which direct and

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[9] Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way For Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. xvii.

[10] Raymond Mohl, "Shadows in the Sunshine: Race and Ethnicity in Miami", *Tequesta*, No. 49 (1989), p. 66.

[11] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), p. 492.

[12] Emphasis in original: Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream*, p. xix.

tangible results cannot always be shown."[13] Yet, if "tangible results" are tricky, it is possible for the historian to show the extent to which promoters regularly cultivated recurrent images and to locate that imagery in a wider historical narrative. The literature that sold California and Florida directed mainstream American "attitudes and values" towards the new environments of the two "semi-tropical" states.

But whose attitudes and values were these texts purporting to reflect? Boosters of California and Florida were invariably white (or, in their preferred usage, Anglo) and thus the material indicates the social and economic motivations and ideals of Anglo-Americans.[14] Whites owned and controlled the major booster organisations in both states and wrote, edited, and published their literature. Ethnic and racial minorities, while they were subjects of the booster material, were neither the authors nor the intended readers. Consequently, within the sources, their presence was constantly manipulated and their voices obscured. How these groups responded to this elision and constructed "counter-narratives" of their own is an important issue but one beyond the scope of this thesis. Excellent histories have been written about the ways in which Mexican and Chinese peoples in California and African Americans in Florida constructed communities which

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[13] *New Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1891), p. 20 [CSL].

[14] I use the term "Anglo" and "Anglo-American" in this thesis interchangeably with (and for variety from) "white," rather than to mean, specifically, white Americans with Anglo-Saxon roots. Scholars apply the term in precisely this way in modern studies of these states; moreover, "Anglo" was a designation employed by boosters at the time. See William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and The Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 9.

struggled against social, economic, and cultural subjugation by Anglo elites.[15] The "colonial" attitudes of white promoters – who envisaged Anglo-American expansion into new, semi-tropical domains – were not mutely accepted by non-white peoples in the two states.[16] My aim, however, is to unpack the booster representations of California and Florida – a literature which was defined by exclusionary notions of race and civilisation. Indeed, to a great extent the historical value of the promotional imagery lies with this exclusion, since it indicates how racist stereotypes and social inequalities were made palatable and consumable – part of the selling material of California and Florida. Such texts contributed to racial hierarchies by casting them as "natural" developments in the new and improved civilisations of Semi-Tropical America.

In that sense, the promotional imagery was far more than a conglomeration of advertising campaigns. Boosterism was part of a broader process of social and cultural change in California and Florida. The historian Charles Postel has noted how in history books "the term *booster* often carries the pejorative connotation of the shrewd speculator," yet it can also be "used…to connote the culture and practice of promotion as an essential

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[15] George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Sucheng Chan, *This Bitter-sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organising and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[16] Paul Spickard, *Almost All Aliens: Immigration, Race, and Colonialism in American History and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 23-25.

part of the late nineteenth-century world of settlement and development".[17] In California and Florida, states far removed from the nation's population centres, boosters played an "essential" role in the psychological conversion of fearsome into desired lands, of "waste places" into American gardens. An influential group who represented railroads, chambers of commerce, state agencies, hotel and real estate companies, and local periodicals, promoters such as Charles Shinn and Charles F. Lummis, in California, and James Wood Davidson and Ethan V. Blackman, in Florida, epitomised affluent Anglo constituencies who were inspired by notions of improving and defining their societies as much as by economic incentives. They envisaged and contributed to industrial, social, and cultural "progress," while "educating" distant Americans about the climatic, natural, and social conditions of their states. More than just salesmen, boosters saw themselves as, and were, facilitators of economic growth and social formation. The mentality was captured by the California Immigration Commission when it declared of land promotion, "The settlement of a country makes a country. The occupation and cultivation of the lands in a State bring property and wealth into the State…and thus the whole country and all the people will be benefited."[18]

Railroad companies demonstrated the diversity and blending of social and economic motives within booster practices. On the West Coast, the Southern Pacific Railroad became

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[17] Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 297. See Jocelyn Wills, *Boosters, Hustlers, and Speculators: Entrepreneurial Culture and the Rise of Minneapolis and St. Paul, 1849-1883* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2004).

[18] I. N. Hoag [California Immigration Commission], *California, the Cornucopia of the World: Room for Millions of Immigrants* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1883), p. 54 [BL].

a powerhouse in the promotion of California.[19] Thanks to federal grants, the Southern Pacific obtained a vast amount of state land (ten million acres in 1882, according to one estimate) for which it sought settlers, while also persuading tourists to frequent hotels like the Del Monte in Monterey; guides and pamphlets produced by California's railroads proliferated across the East and Midwest.[20] In Florida, the motivations were similar, as railroad construction in the 1880s and 1890s transformed the peninsula, allied to major promotional efforts by the transportation companies. The railroad empires of Henry Plant and Henry Flagler, featuring hotel and tourism agencies alongside land and agricultural interests, united ideas of leisure and labour in the same booster literature.

The two states were also "sold" at dozens of fairs and expositions (of which the railroad companies were key promoters), in tourist and immigration guides, and in regional magazines. Of the latter, the *Californian* (1880-1882) was followed by Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce-funded *Land of Sunshine* in 1894, and *Sunset*, launched in 1898 by the Southern Pacific Company. Edited by Charles F. Lummis, a Social Darwinist and tireless advocate of Southern California, *Land of Sunshine* magazine, as Kevin Starr writes, "no doubt helped to stimulate migration into the Southland".[21] Magazines were similarly important in the promotion of Florida, including the *Semi-Tropical* – a Reconstruction-era periodical edited by the former state governor, Harrison Reed – and, from 1899, the *Florida East Coast Homeseeker*, which represented Flagler's railroad and land interests. A careful

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[19] Richard Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[20] Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 165.

[21] Ibid, p. 85.

trawl through these magazines provides a full picture of how California and Florida were recast and sold.

The national focus of this thesis reflects the extensive distribution of promotional texts which targeted especially Northerners and Midwesterners. The most populous and wealthiest parts of America, these were also the regions from which most of the promoters themselves originated. A few examples will have to suffice: Lummis was from Massachusetts, while Davidson lived most of his life in New York before settling in South Florida. "What is the character of the population of Southern California?" asked the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce in 1891. "It is mostly eastern, representing true American enterprise, stability and refinement."[22] While Florida also received arrivals from neighbouring Southern states, its promoters similarly focused their efforts on the North and Midwest. George Barbour's 1882 guidebook thus targeted the "vigorous and thoroughgoing Northern and Western men who constitute the bulk of the immigration to Florida."[23] Moreover, promoters of Northern and Midwestern origins who migrated to California and Florida infused their works with an autobiographical faith in the benefits of travel and resettlement. They also invariably looked back to what they had left behind and made comparisons. The two states were thus contrasted with those "older" parts of America, as boosters articulated hopes and expectations that California and Florida could progress without succumbing to the undesired consequences of modernity which were evident in the colder, more populous, industrial regions of the nation. Desire to set these states apart

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[22] *New Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California*, p. 19.

[23] George Barbour, *Florida for Tourists, Invalids and Settlers: Containing Practical Information regarding Climate, Soil and Productions* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1882), p. 238 [UF].

encouraged the pervasive use of "semi-tropical" as a representative term of California and Florida.

Tracing how semi-tropicality brought California and Florida into an exclusive partnership and rivalry, the thesis takes a comparative approach and avoids the one-state focus which has dominated studies of their respective promotions. Among the many illuminating works on the boosterism of these states, none have considered in any depth the connections and contrasts which shaped their development.[24] The finest study of California boosterism remains an unpublished 1973 PhD thesis by Richard Orsi – a study which stressed organisational structures and programmes over the interdisciplinary approach taken here – while Kevin Starr's *Inventing the Dream*, a seminal text in charting the "California Dream," only briefly discusses the semi-tropical imagery.[25] K. D. and Gary Kurutz's *California Calls You: The Art of Promoting the Golden State, 1870-1940*, is a thorough catalogue of the boosters' "portrayal of an abundant land of wealth and sunshine with opportunities for all," but which does not critically examine the myths, motivations, and policies of selection and exclusion which governed the promotional literature.[26] Anne E. Rowe, meanwhile, has charted "the idea of Florida" as it was crafted by American writers,

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[24] Carey McWilliams, *Southern California Country: An Island of the Land* (New York: Ayer, 1949); Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (London: Pimlico, 1998); Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*.

[25] Richard J. Orsi, "Selling the Golden State: A Study of Boosterism in Nineteenth Century California", (Unpublished PhD. Diss., Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1973); Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, p. 45.

[26] K. D. Kurutz & Gary Kurutz, *California Calls You: The Art of Promoting the Golden State, 1870-1940* (Sausalito: Windgate Press, 2000), p. 7.

but gives precedence to true "literary" works rather than booster ephemera.[27] Although novels and non-fiction works can perhaps be highly influential in shaping popular ideas of a place (Helen Hunt Jackson's novel *Ramona*, for example, arguably altered Anglo visions of Southern California's past), the booster canon of pamphlets, magazines, guidebooks, and articles, functioned in a more direct fashion, as place advertisements which dealt explicitly with the benefits of settlement, tourism and investment. Some scholarly articles have touched on Florida's treatment in such texts, but they provide all-too-brief insights into what is a complex mass of material.[28]

What is lacking is in-depth, comparative analysis of the booster imageries of both California and Florida. There are, of course, both advantages and risks to such a framework. American historians have often been "apprehensive" about comparative history – in particular, in venturing international comparisons, which not only challenge the doctrine of U.S. exceptionalism but require "potentially enormous quantities of data" and source materials beyond the specialist demands of modern academia.[29] As Carl Degler has written of cross-national studies, however, "Comparisons highlight aspects of a nation's past that are obscured or overlooked until thrown against a backdrop of another country's

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[27] Anne E. Rowe, *The Idea of Florida in the American Literary Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992).

[28] Tommy R. Thompson, "Florida in American Popular Magazines, 1870-1970", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 82 (2003), pp. 1-15. John Spivack, "Paradise Awaits: A Sampling and Brief Analysis of Late Nineteenth Century Promotional Pamphlets on Florida", *Southern Studies*, Vol. 21 (1982), pp. 429-438.

[29] Erich Angermann, "Challenges of Ambiguity: Doing Comparative History" in *Challenges of Ambiguity: Doing Comparative History* [German Historical Institute – Annual Lecture Series, No. 4] (New York: Berg, 1991), pp. 1-20. See C. Vann Woodward (ed.), *The Comparative Approach to American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. xi-xiii.

history."[30] Although this study compares two American states rather than nations, the same logic applies. While historians have (often justifiably) described California and Florida as exceptional, these geographically disparate states were also intimately connected. Some scholars have acknowledged this relationship. Stephen Whitfield, for example, dissects Florida's constructed "identity" through a contrast with California, arguing that "the self-definition of Florida has been fudged, and has not been quite authentic enough to impose itself on the national imagination as effectively as has the other end of the Sunbelt." [31] He proposed a number of social and cultural factors – including sectional significance (West versus South), famous authors who wrote about California, and the location of the film industry in Hollywood – as explanations of why, in a historical context, "Florida can be seen as a re-run of California".[32] Whitfield's article raises interesting questions about the similarities and differences between the two states but no scholar has subsequently taken up and applied the comparison in a more focused way.

Ultimately the strongest justification of a comparative approach, however, is that this was precisely the view taken by thousands of Americans at the time, such as the Midwestern founders of the Pasadena colony who chose Southern California over Florida. If California and Florida are nowadays often associated together as the homes of America's Disney amusement parks, they were closely linked in a much earlier period. After the Civil War, their promoters actively engaged with each other – not only as rivals but also as

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[30] Carl N. Degler, "In Making Historical Comparisons Focus on Common National Issues", in Angermann, *Challenges*, p. 21.

[31] Stephen Whitfield, "Florida's Fudged Identity", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 71 (April 1993), pp. 7-29.

[32] Ibid, p. 27.

advocates of two states which faced similar challenges and goals. As a journalist observed in 1883, "Each [state] claims to [be] the 'Italy of America,' the winter sanitarium of the country, and the true semi-tropical paradise."[33] The states were promoted in contact and contrast with one another, producing a relationship which helped to craft their own identities. Thus by studying the selling of California, one may better understand the selling of Florida, and vice versa.

The two states were not the same, of course, in reputation or reality. California possessed a range of important advantages over Florida, which included contrasting ideas of rebirth and decay. California was Western and historically a "free" state, and associated with a legacy of opportunity born out of the Gold Rush; it was dry and arid but capable of remarkable agricultural productivity, given irrigation, capital and skill. Florida, a Southern slave state which joined the Confederacy and was part of the losing side in the Civil War, suffered the sectional fallout and economic ruin of the South. It was also damp and widely considered a more intimidating environment for permanent residency than Southern California; even though it offered cheaper land. If hardly an impartial commentator, a journalist in the *Daily Alta California* echoed common opinion when he declared, "Both climates are recommended for the health, but that of California has an advantage in being healthful the year round, while in Florida the dreaded malaria rules in Summer."[34] In addition to climatic distinctions, California benefited from the historic American faith in the West as a source of republican rebirth. Florida, by contrast, suffered from sectional connotations of the South as a land of backwardness and decay. Although Florida attracted

[33] "Florida and California", *Daily Alta California* (July 23, 1883), p. 2.

[34] Ibid, p. 2.

sizeable numbers of Georgians and other Southerners who were unaffected by such sectional beliefs, the state's promoters targeted Northerners and Midwesterners who undoubtedly were influenced by those ideas.

These differences did not prohibit comparison, however. On the contrary, they made contrasts fruitful, particularly as similar but not identical ideas of semi-tropicality linked the pair. As a writer in the *Los Angeles Times* observed, "In what is known as the Southwestern States, meaning thereby the Gulf States, one finds one portion of Semi-Tropic America; the other and far lovelier part is Southern California."[35] Although both constituted "Semi-Tropic America" they were not identical. His argument – representative of many West Coast boosters – posited that Southern California offered the semi-tropical benefits of climate and nature without the "oppressive" heat and disease associated with the Southern states. This distinction was crucial to Southern California's semi-tropical imagery. New Orleans, for example, had long been regarded as semi-tropical but – due to yellow fever and cholera epidemics in the 1850s which were widely reported in the Northeast – the city carried disturbing connotations of infection and death: "[A]t times," George W. Cable later wrote of the city, "the very floors were covered with the sick and dying, and the sawing and hammering in the coffin-shop…ceased not day or night".[36] Southern California was thus promoted as a superior version of Semi-Tropic America, possessing a dry, desert climate that eliminated the water-born diseases of the Gulf States. After considering the limited merits of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, the *Times* writer added: "Florida more than

[35] "Semi-Tropic America", *Los Angeles Times*, p. 3.

[36] George W. Cable, "Dr. Sevier", *Century*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (January 1884), p. 422.

any other of these resembles Southern California."[37] But despite – or, more likely, because of – this "resemblance," Florida was the Southern state most frequently denigrated by Californians. The booster arrows flew back the other way too, of course, although Florida boosters also found value in looking to Southern California for inspiration, in part as a means of overcoming the sectional hindrances expressed above: Florida imagined, first and foremost, as "semi-tropical" rather than as "Southern". Through comparison the differences between the states were simultaneously evoked and diminished.

The only scholar who has discussed the visions of California as "semi-tropical" has marginalised them. In *Inventing the Dream*, Kevin Starr acknowledges "the semi-tropical comparison" evoked by promoters yet argued that it was too problematic and that the state's "inventors" settled instead on a "more civilised" Mediterranean vision of a New Italy or Spain.[38] The semi-tropical image of the state, Starr writes, "eventually collapsed under scientific scrutiny, but more than this – from its first appearance it did not sit well with the American imagination." Semi-tropicality "allowed nature a wild, defiant luxuriance which could never be subdued by industry. It made the [California] sun too hot, a scorching sun or, more frighteningly, a sun that would sap the Northern European sources of the American will, turning industrious immigrants into loafers."[39] Other California historians have echoed this assertion, dismissing the semi-tropical representations as "counterproductive".[40] They believe, in short, that the boosters got it wrong.

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[37] "Semi-Tropic America", *Los Angeles Times*, p. 3.

[38] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, p. 45.

[39] Ibid, p. 45.

[40] Douglas C. Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 29-30.

That conclusion fails to account for how and why leading promoters in both California and Florida consistently sold their states as semi-tropical. Indeed, it was so successful and "productive" in California that Florida boosters emulated the semi-tropical concept in selling their own state. For about fifty years semi-tropical imagery was not extreme but *mainstream*, appearing in countless publications dealing with these states. The term (or a variation such as "sub-tropical") was employed by noted writers such as Charles Dudley Warner, Harriet Beecher Stowe and irrigation promoter William Ellsworth Smythe, all of whom accepted it as the best description of Southern California and Florida. Furthermore, the Mediterranean distinction made by Starr is misleading, given that what Americans considered to be the "semi-tropics" usually included the Mediterranean. In the lexicon of the times, Spain, Italy, and Greece were "semi-tropical countries," just as Charles Nordhoff's California was both "semi-tropical" and "the Italy of this continent."[41] Mediterranean comparisons were, in that sense, a subset of a global semi-tropical notion – a calculated link with the "civilised" semi-tropical regions of Europe. As the *Los Angeles Times* explained in 1890, "Oranges…are grown all over the semi-tropical world," a zone which included "Spain, Italy, Northern Africa, China, Southern California, Florida, and Palestine."[42] These countries did not share identical latitudes but were understood to exist in a semi-tropical "zone" because of their climates and natural products (especially citrus).

Yet California and Florida were also seen as fundamentally different from "Old World" semi-tropics in terms of their social conditions, reflecting the ambivalent, if not derogatory, opinions many Anglo-Americans held about Italy and Spain. According to their

[41] Charles Nordhoff, *California for Health, Pleasure, and Residence: A Book for Travelers and Settlers* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1873), p. 172.

[42] "Eating Oranges", *Los Angeles Times* (February 24, 1890), p. 6.

boosters, California and Florida lacked the deep cultural histories of Europe but, more attractively and importantly, avoided the latter's supposedly decrepit modern sociopolitical conditions, which, as one article put it, made Italy home to "a race of paupers" whereas Florida was "the home of the independent American citizen".[43] In short, California and Florida were seen as "new" rather than "old". Despite having been populated by Native Americans, African Americans, Spaniards and/or Mexicans for decades and centuries past, they were seen as semi-tropical *tabula rasa* ready for Anglo-American history and progress. The states were sold as unprecedented openings for Yankees and Midwesterners to tame semi-tropical nature through their superior energy and enterprise, while that nature would help them learn to enjoy leisure and life. Infused with these ideas, semi-tropical imagery was not "an extreme" which failed as "a controlling metaphor," but a concept which, as this thesis shows, "sat" very well with Anglo-Americans in this period.[44] Rather than dismiss it, we should recognise and try to explain its appeal.

The promotion of California and Florida as semi-tropical states successfully combined two dominant discourses in American expansion, which I will refer to as republicanism and colonialism. The first, republicanism, envisaged the formation of homogeneous communities defined by middling wealth, self-directed labour, and "a society of equal and virtuous citizens"; independent entities which avoided the Old World curses of concentrated wealth, class division, and unremitting poverty.[45] As David E. Nye has

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[43] 'Itinerant', "In the Semi-Tropics", *Los Angeles Times* (March 29, 1885), p. 4. See also Elizabeth Bacon Custer, "Memories of 'Our Italy'", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 1895), pp. 51-56.

[44] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, p. 45.

[45] Gordon Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 7. Robert E. Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding

written, white Americans from the Revolution onwards "narrated" continental expansion as a "republican" process enabled by technologies, including axe, mill, canal, railroad, and irrigation.[46] These "foundation narratives" about the technological transformation of nature ascribed meaning, justification and impetus to the westward settlement of Americans. Technologies became the means through which settlers crafted a "second creation" of the landscape and experienced republican rebirth: "Importantly, [the foundation narratives] expressed a belief that these technologies would enable [Americans] to preserve their egalitarian difference from the Old World. For example…second-creation stories presented the American axe not as a weapon but as an instrument of peace used by individual pioneers to carve a civilisation of independent farmers out of the wilderness."[47] Foundation narratives, to be sure, incorporated the exclusionary characteristics of Manifest Destiny, championing white settlement while aspects of racial conquest were often "deleted" altogether, in part because these stories had to be "progressive and optimistic…They gripped the imagination and convinced people to leap into the unknown."[48] The end result of expansion, however, was social homogeneity and equality – at least, in terms of a more meritocratic society than that left behind, with independence available to the enterprising settler. Through these foundation narratives, remote and intimidating environments were "Americanised" into republican homelands.

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of Republicanism in American Historiography", *William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (January 1972), pp. 49-80.

[46] David E. Nye, *America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), esp. pp. 1-20.

[47] Ibid, pp. 5-6.

[48] Ibid, p. 11.

The second discourse – colonialism – contrasted with republicanism by stressing development based upon hierarchy and inequality. Where republicanism envisaged a broadly independent citizenry, colonialism demanded unequal coexistence and explicit forms of domination. As Paul Spickard writes, "European American expansion across the North American continent…had a colonial quality to it – it was the homeland of other peoples, and the United States took it by force and made subjects of the former owners – and racial hierarchy was made in that enterprise."[49] Colonialist narratives fixate upon divisions and strata within "new" societies, for example between land-owners and workers or tourists and servants, and justify these as developmental necessities.[50] Inherently undemocratic in its approach, colonialism (and its precursor, "imperialism") has often been obscured in America's continental history. As Amy Kaplan has written, "United States continental expansion is often treated as an entirely separate phenomenon from European colonialism of the nineteenth century, rather than as an interrelated form of imperial expansion."[51] As a result, America's imperialistic "moment" in the 1890s – the venture overseas and acquisition, under different guises, of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines – could be described as an "aberration" and even betrayal of republican origins

[49] Spickard, *Almost All Aliens*, p. 23.

[50] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 221.

[51] Amy Kaplan, "'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture", in Amy Kaplan & Donald E. Pease (eds.), *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 17.

(as many Anti-Imperialists charged at the time).[52] Such readings, however, deny the extent to which republicanism and colonialism coexisted as defining discourses within American conceptions of expansion. As Andy Doolen argues of the early American republic, "The republican rhetoric of liberty and equality for all not only obscured but, more insidiously, legitimised the operations of imperialism."[53]

Race formed a critical nexus here.[54] Whereas republican expansionism focused on the homogeneity of a white citizenry and often obscured non-white peoples who did fit into this mould (and who were left, as Nye shows, to construct their own "counter-narratives"), imperialism and colonialism involved explicit affirmations of race and power. Colonialist writers focused on innate differences between peoples and societies. The discursive alternative to "foundation narratives," which described man shaping nature, these might be termed *formation narratives*, since they attributed the formation of national and individual characteristics to the physical environments in which those traits emerged – including, of course, racial traits. Hence white Europeans and Americans were said to have evolved into a superior, energetic race, in part, because they had always inhabited colder lands which challenged their inhabitants, whereas non-white, tropical peoples were said to be backward and listless, in part, due to the heat and fecundity of the tropics. Pseudo-scientific doctrines

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[52] See Frederick Merk, "Imperialism was the Antithesis of Manifest Destiny", in Richard H. Miller (ed.), *American Imperialism in 1898: The Quest for National Fulfillment* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1970), pp. 32-36.

[53] Andy Doolen, *Fugitive Empire: Locating Early American Imperialism* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), p. xiii.

[54] Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London: Verso, 1990), p. 10.

reinforced this logic. Lamarckian ideas of evolutionary "soft" inheritance, which posited that species inherited the acquired traits of their ancestors, were widely accepted in America and Europe, and made environmental factors appear fundamental to human development. But the expansion of a race into a new climate and environment – such as that explicitly envisaged by the promoters of "semi-tropical" California and Florida – encouraged and required partial reconstruction of the belief that there existed an immutable connection between race and environment. Thus new "formation narratives" were constructed to sell the semi-tropical states to white Americans.

For our purposes, the most relevant formation narratives in America in this period related to Anglo conceptions of their own rapidly-industrialising society, on the one hand, and of tropical regions, on the other. Socioeconomic convulsions punctuated late-nineteenth century America. In the words of Robert Wiebe, the period witnessed "the breakdown of [one] society and the emergence of a new system," as America transformed from an antebellum "society of island communities" to an urban, industrial nation.[55] Severe depressions followed banking collapses in 1873 and 1893, sparking unemployment and labour unrest.[56] Supposedly "un-assimilating" immigrants from southern and eastern Europe poured in unprecedented numbers into the urban North and Midwest, while farmers across the South and West joined the Populist movement. If most Americans maintained a broad faith in the idea of "progress," these new realities forced a re-evaluation of what progress meant and how it might be achieved. As John Kasson writes, a "sense of contradiction between inherited values and sudden change, between technological progress

[55] Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), p. xiii.

[56] Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. 1-61.

and social discontent, between republican principles and the new industrial order welled up powerfully in the late nineteenth century."[57]

The internal crisis – "the great turn…into modern America," as Walter LaFeber describes it – was typified by the closing of the frontier.[58] Confirmed by the 1890 Census and then described by Frederick Jackson Turner as "the end of the first chapter in American history," the closure of the frontier marked a decisive transition for a nation which equated republican "health" with expansion into "free" lands that provided settlers with routes to independence.[59] For Turner, the frontier was the basis for a vital formation narrative: Americans were exceptional because their "character" and society had been forged in the New World encounter of "civilised" man with a "savage" continent.[60] The closing of the frontier provoked fears over national destiny and American identity, which boosters of California and Florida both shared and exploited. Older republican visions of landed independence no longer seemed to apply to the urbanised North; at the same time, fears of "over-civilisation" proliferated as increasing numbers of middle-class Americans lived in

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[57] John Kasson, *Civilising the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900* (New York: Penguin, 1976), pp. 183-234.

[58] LaFeber, *The New Empire*, p. xxix. David Wrobel, *The End of American Exceptionalism: Frontier Anxiety from the Old West to the New Deal* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1993).

[59] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* [1893] (New York: Ungar, 1963), p. 1.

[60] Ibid, p. 2.

cities and imagined themselves becoming "enfeebled," in part because they were divorced from renewing contact with nature.[61]

As remote and distinctive states, California and Florida both promised new narratives for anxious Anglo-Americans, in which labour and leisure offered different remedies. According to promoters, the two states were uniquely fertile regions which suited prosperous small farming and offered republican alternatives to the urban-industrial North and Midwest. Technologies, in particular railroads and land reclamation, were crucial to this promotion, but served as factors within a broader booster effort to narrate Anglo-American domestication of California and Florida. Land promoters tapped into America's free labour ideology of an egalitarian society of self-directed citizens as they envisaged a meeting of American "enterprise" (a term which encompassed human, technological, and financial capacities) with semi-tropical nature – the offspring of which would be progressive agricultural communities of independent settlers.[62]

But the climatic and natural exoticism of the two states led inevitably to the second "formation narrative," relating to Anglo beliefs about tropical regions. As David Arnold has observed of European writings on the tropics: "The symbolism…was deeply ambivalent, for a landscape of seeming natural abundance and great fertility was also paradoxically a landscape of poverty and disease."[63] A global discourse which intertwined race,

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[61] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981).

[62] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

[63] David Arnold, "'Illusory Riches': Representations of the Tropical World, 1840-1950", *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, Vol. 21 (January 2000), pp. 6-18. See also the chapter "Inventing Tropicality" in

environment, and empire cast the tropics as places less fit for white settlement and progressive society. To an extent, this belief justified European imperial rule as a prerequisite for tropical development.[64] As Judith T. Kenny has written of British colonialism in India, "Race, and its association with environment, became key to the late nineteenth-century definition of differential power relations between the imperial rulers and those they ruled."[65] But this also made the "imagined geography" of the tropics frightening for whites, associated with a virulent and disturbing type of foreignness. Charles Dudley Warner thus declared in 1896 (in a Southern California promotional magazine), "It has become an accepted deduction that the Anglo-Saxon will dwindle and become inefficient in the tropics. His intellectual faculties may not be atrophied, but there will be no physical energy behind them to make them effective."[66]

These views were so pervasive in American society that they influenced national policy. As Eric T. Love has shown, contrary to the traditional scholarship which depicted American imperialism as bolstered by (ambivalent) racial narratives like the "White Man's Burden," racism acted as a "formidable obstacle" to American attempts at tropical

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David Arnold, *The Problem of Nature: Environment, Culture, and European Expansion* (Maiden: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 141-168.

[64] See Benjamin Kidd, *The Control of the Tropics* (London: MacMillan & Co. Ltd, 1898).

[65] Judith T. Kenny, "Climate, Race, and Imperial Authority: The Symbolic Landscape of the British Hill Station in India", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 85, No. 4 (December 1995), p. 695.

[66] Charles Dudley Warner, "Race and Climate", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 4, No 3 (February 1896), p. 104.

expansion.[67] White Americans (including prominent statesmen like Charles Sumner and Carl Schurz) objected to annexing "hot" lands which were perceived to be home to "undesirable" non-white populations incapable of self-government, just as Anglos, it was believed, could never thrive in such environments. The tropics, then, would always be home to non-white races, the absorption of whom threatened America's future. President Ulysses S. Grant's fervent efforts to purchase the Dominican Republic in 1870 failed due to Congressional opposition, with Schurz painting a terrific picture of a coming day in which tropical colonies voted and "the Senators and Representatives of ten or twelve millions of tropical people, people of the Latin race mixed with Indian and African blood," who "have neither language, nor traditions, nor habits, nor political institutions, nor morals in common with us," would influence the "destinies of this Republic."[68] Up to the Spanish-American War in 1898 – and, indeed, beyond – tropical expansion was fraught with Anglo fears over the racial and social "fitness" of such regions for republican society.

Promoters of "semi-tropical" California and Florida envisaged an enticing middle zone between the over-industrial North and these "primitive" tropics. Applied to two states which formed part of the continental United States and had shared in its "language" and "political institutions" – if less so, perhaps, its "traditions" and "habits" – since 1848 and 1821, respectively, the semi-tropical imagery encompassed a range of attractive ideas relating to the tropics while, crucially, jettisoning some of the more terrifying fears of race and environment, as articulated by the likes of Schurz and Warner. The appeal of the semi-tropical imagery to many boosters was surely that it enabled them to both have their cake

[67] Eric T. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 25.

[68] Senator Carl Schurz quoted in Ibid, p. 67.

and eat it: to play upon Anglo expansive attitudes towards tropical regions as lands of untapped riches and yet to do so without the hassle, strife, or moral dilemmas inextricable from overseas imperialism. If similarly possessing rare natural benefits, California and Florida were conceived of as fundamentally different from the tropics in terms of race and society. They were sold as "semi-tropical" regions under the control of incoming Anglo-American settlers, tourists, and developers, making them unique openings for both restorative leisure and healthy, democratic settlement. In both states, however, the booster visions reflected, and were reinforced by, policies such as Chinese exclusion in California and the imposition of African American disenfranchisement and segregation in Florida. The promotional imagery skilfully located American republicanism and rebirth alongside racial dominance and non-white subordination which could be attained in Semi-Tropical America. Thus, where the tropics appeared racially and environmentally anathema to republicanism, California and Florida were imagined and sold as semi-tropical frontiers where Anglo-Americans could thrive and prosper.

The thesis takes both a chronological and thematic approach to the selling of California and Florida. The first chapter puts the subsequent developments of imagery into historical context, looking at the antebellum period and pre-existing connections between the states. Focusing on the decade after the Civil War, the chapter considers how four influential travel guides – two about California, two about Florida – articulated their "tropical" qualities, which, in many ways, set the tone for later boosters.

Chapters two and three cover thematically the promotion of semi-tropical California and Florida during the late nineteenth century. The twin emphases on leisure (chapter two) and labour (chapter three) reflect the versatile nature of the booster literature. Canny promoters located Southern California and peninsular Florida as lands which provided for

two somewhat contradictory qualities: healthful, exotic leisure and rewarding agricultural labour, both of which became fundamental to the growing economies of the two regions. Moreover, both leisure and labour were tied into concepts of American renewal and were contradictory only when considered within the bigger picture of how the two states were depicted. The contrasting emphases, in truth, related to different audiences simultaneously being targeted – albeit often in the same texts. The leisure appeal of a semi-tropical land was directed towards affluent tourists who would buy railroad tickets, frequent hotels, and invest in the region. Promoters stressed the leisure benefits of the semi-tropics in hotel pamphlets, magazines, and health guides. The economic and social incentives of semi-tropical agriculture, meanwhile, were described for prospective settlers from a range of economic backgrounds, who would settle lands, raise and ship crops, and contribute to steady material growth. Semi-tropical agriculture dominated horticultural periodicals and immigration and land company publications. Together, leisure and labour formed the core of a booster literature in which ideas of racial hierarchy and republican homogeneity existed in tandem.

Chapters four and five chart the promotional imagery of the states in the Progressive Era, through the themes of land reclamation and cities. As the states became more populous and better known, boosters increasingly looked to new environments, including un-reclaimed "waste" spaces and fast-growing cities. As chapter four shows, the interior regions of California's Imperial Valley and Florida's Everglades became focal points for promotional and developmental efforts, in which tropical metaphors again came to the fore: these one-time deserts and swamps, it seemed, were the only remaining tropical lands open to the man of moderate means. Agribusiness increasingly dominated in Southern California and South Florida, however, and rising land values and more effective cooperatives of

growers contributed to a hardening gap between landowners and field workers. Land companies and conservationist promoters in both states, however, depicted irrigation and drainage as vital forces in a healthy, internal expansion, far preferable to overseas imperialism, which would produce independent American citizenries. As the irrigated transformation of Southern California became a symbol for boosters of "swampy" South Florida, promoters in each proclaimed the republican "conquest" of tropical wilds.

Chapter five concludes the thesis with the promotion of the two leading cities of Semi-Tropical America: Los Angeles and Miami. As agriculture became more capital-intensive, urban environments acquired greater prominence in the promotional imagery. Many settlers coming to Southern California and Florida were also older, wealthier, and in search of a comfortable, suburban lifestyle – a desire which boosters both addressed and fostered, constructing visions of alternative cities which contrasted with the "industrial" metropolises of the Northeast and Midwest. Through chambers of commerce pamphlets, magazines, guidebooks, and advertisements, Los Angeles and, later, Miami were sold as semi-tropical cities where modern America could be renewed and improved. Los Angeles served as a model for Miami boosters, as both cities were boosted as idyllic urban landscapes of suburban beauty and contented living. Although Mexicans in Los Angeles and African Americans in Miami were not wholly excised from the imagery, they were limited to subjugated, yet vital, roles as manual workers and servants – a marginalisation which mirrored and supported the real segregation of ethnic and racial minorities in both cities. The promotion of Los Angeles and Miami evolved easily from earlier booster visions and into the 1920s they represented urban culminations of the booster ideals of semi-tropical homelands for Anglo-Americans.

Charting the period from 1869 to 1919, the thesis proposes five main conclusions. First, contrary to what scholars have argued, semi-tropical imagery was central to the promotion and transformation of Southern California and peninsular Florida. Second, these semi-tropical comparisons reflected and reinforced contrasting "republican" and "colonialist" attitudes evident in American culture and society. Third, the semi-tropical visions of the states, which veered between "exotic" tropical fantasies and "familiar" narratives of American settlement, were infused with racial distinctions that contributed to divisive social realities. Fourth, the semi-tropical imagery was not identical in California and Florida, which differed in several ways, since California possessed advantages over Florida which caused the latter to look to the West Coast for inspiration. Fifth and finally, the two states benefited from a rivalry which ultimately legitimised them as hotter lands being "domesticated" by and for white Americans. As a California newspaper declared in 1887, "We can suffer nothing by comparison with Florida; we must gain much. Such competition as does exist only stimulates the spirit of travel and inquiry, and we are therefore to congratulate [sic] that our heritage is made more prominent by comparison with that of our Florida friends."[69] The competition was not destructive but beneficial – a driving force for two states which were re-imagined as America's own semi-tropical lands.

[69] "California and Florida", *Sacramento Daily Union* (December 2, 1887), p. 2.

Chapter 1

"Our" Tropical Lands:

Guidebook Re-inventions of California and Florida after the Civil War

Remoteness in multiple guises defined American conceptions of antebellum California and Florida. Both states were widely perceived as far-off and exotic lands which had little in common with the North or Midwest. This shared foreignness would bring the states into a comparative relationship as aspects of their remoteness diminished into the 1870s; a critical shift took place in which previously negative traits such as remoteness and tropicality became spurs for how California and Florida were re-invented and sold. These new visions, however, were crafted from the existing reputations of – and social realities within – the two states. Semi-Tropical America, therefore, did not appear identical in the new creations.

This chapter focuses on four prominent guidebooks from the years 1873 to 1875 which played a catalytic role in how the two states were perceived and sold in the late nineteenth century. By then, travel guidebooks had already become big business in America, constituting a market of literature which was read extensively by middle-class Americans. Guidebooks were often directly promotional, sponsored by railroads that recognised their influence in attracting visitors and settlers, but even those which were not invariably made their subject appear enticing. As Anne Hyde has written of guidebooks which educated distant Americans on the West, they did so by striking a balance between observing things "new, curious, and wonderful" and others which were familiarly

"American".[70] In the cases of Southern California and Florida, however, the sheer exoticism of the environments meant that sections of the guidebooks often mimicked Euro-American writings on tropical lands. In the latter, as Matthew Frye Jacobson has written, "Exotic lands became lovely commodities to be desired and possessed; [while] by rendering indigenous peoples as mere fixtures of that landscape, the very language and logic of a travelogue effaced the 'natives' as sentient agents in their own right, and denied the import of their own languages," customs, and world-views.[71] A similar process of effacing occurred for Native Americans, Mexicans, and Chinese in California, and Native Americans and African Americans in Florida, as guidebooks contributed to a recasting of California and Florida as regions for white Americans. In both states, the guidebooks incorporated growing nationwide anxieties about the increasingly urban, industrial character of society in the "older" states, and the writers turned to the special natures of California and Florida as viable alternatives. Although contrasting in emphases, Charles Nordhoff and Benjamin Truman, in California, and Harriet Beecher Stowe and Edward King, in Florida, envisaged ways in which Anglo-Americans could discover personal and social benefits in semi-tropical climes.

For an antebellum American, however, California and Florida would probably have seemed an unlikely pair of states to consider together. Major factors differentiated them: Western versus Southern; free versus slave; desert versus swamp. In broad brushstrokes, California was emblematic of the "wild and woolly" Far West: a "rip-snorting mining

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[70] Anne Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990), pp. 122-3.

[71] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: the United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), p. 110.

camp" of a state, offering glittering chances at wealth and freedom that, to the chagrin of observers, often swelled over into lawlessness.[72] Florida, meanwhile, was a sleepy and swampy backwater – part of, yet peripheral to, the slaveholding South, untamed despite intermittent but brutal wars of removal conducted by the American military against the Seminole Indians.[73] The fundamental difference between the two states reflected divergent relationships towards that most vital of American concepts: freedom. After intense national debates over how its admission to the Union would break the fragile balance of free and slave states, California was admitted as a free state in 1850, whereas slavery had been legal in Florida since the territory was formalised in 1821 and subsequently made a state in 1845. Any comparative study of California and Florida in the post-bellum period must acknowledge these different origins, as Florida was affected by slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction, a damaging history from which California was removed. As a West Coast journalist wrote in 1883, "Florida has suffered from disadvantages, such as the Civil War, to which California has been a stranger, and has never received any such impetus as the gold discovery gave this State."[74]

The comparison, then, is an imbalanced one. State population statistics from 1840 to 1870 tell only a fraction of the story but are nonetheless also revealing. In 1850, the two states had similar-sized populations; twenty years later, California's was three times bigger

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[72] Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 57-58. "Mining camp" quotation from Richard Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press), p. 133.

[73] James C. Covington, *The Seminoles of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993).

[74] "Florida and California", *Daily Alta California* (July 23, 1883), p. 2.

than Florida's (a rise deeply indebted to the Gold Rush, but which also indicated the appeal of a free state as opposed to a slave one):

Fig. 1.1 – Table of Population Statistics, California & Florida (1840-1870):

Year	California	Florida
1840	n/a†	54,477
1850	92,597	87,445
1860	379,994	140,424
1870	560,247	187,748

† Data unknown; California part of Mexico.
Historical Statistics of the United States – Millennial Edition – Vol. 1 – Population (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1-192, 1-213.

This appeal reflected the free labour ideology dominant in the antebellum North. As Eric Foner has showed, popular ideals regarding the right of individuals to pursue economic and social independence through their own labour constituted an ideology which was pervasive in the free states and which crystallised into a political force during the crisis over the potential expansion of slavery westward.[75] "In the free labour outlook," Foner wrote, "the objective of social mobility was not great wealth, but the middle-class goal of economic independence. For Republicans, 'free labour' meant labour with economic choices, with the opportunity to quit the wage-earning class. A man who remained…dependent on wages for his livelihood appeared almost as un-free as the southern slave."[76] The entrenched presence of slavery in the South dissuaded potential migrants from the North who saw a two-tier society which degraded labour and offered little scope for upward mobility. As T. B.

[75] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 301-317.

[76] Ibid, pp. 16-17.

Forbush of the New England Emigrant Aid Company stated of Florida, "While slavery cursed the land, few northern men could be induced to settle there."[77] With Florida subsequently hindered by the Civil War and Reconstruction, sectional legacies continued to make the southern state a problematic prospect for many Americans, while California developed a glow of democratic, albeit speculative, opportunity through associations with westward expansion and the Gold Rush – and as a land which held true to republican ideals of free labour.

Despite these differences, antebellum California and Florida also shared certain similarities which informed later promotional visions of them as semi-tropical American lands. Both were former Spanish colonies obtained following bursts of expansionist energy; both contained topography considered threatening; and, for most Americans, both were climatically distinctive and geographically remote. Indeed, at the heart of these similarities was the idea of remoteness: of being a "land apart" from a core United States (meaning, here, the Northeast and Midwest, from which most boosters and their target audiences originated). When Charles Nordhoff declared in 1873 that Southern California "is a region almost unknown," he did not mean that Americans had never heard of it but that they had almost no direct experience of Southern California, which was so remote, outside the sphere of Anglo-American traditions and history, as to be foreign – which, of course, until 1848, it had been.[78] The idea was similar for J. S. Adams, Florida's first Commissioner of Immigration after the Civil War, who explained that Florida "is still a *terra incognita*, to a

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[77] T. B. Forbush, *Florida: The Advantages and Inducements Which It Offers to Immigrants* (Boston: New England Emigrant Aid Company, 1868), p. 3 [UNF].

[78] Charles Nordhoff, *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence: A Book for Travellers and Settlers* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1873), p. 12.

great extent. Her capacities are comparatively untested and unknown."[79] These were lands which had existed beyond the realm of Anglo-American experience. They would appear both fearsome and enticing because of this.

Florida and California were most obviously remote in spatial terms. While Jacksonville in northern Florida was a not inconsiderable 835 miles from New York City, California's main city, San Francisco, stood over 2,500 miles away – across an expanse, furthermore, dreaded for the barriers it presented to passage, including the so-called Great American Desert, the Rocky Mountains, and the Sierra Nevadas, which had notoriously claimed the lives of the Donner Party in 1846.[80] But California and Florida were also termini, the ends of America's domain. The Southwestern and Southeastern corners of the continental United States, they led on to the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean; two bodies of water which, unlike the Atlantic Ocean, held for the majority of white Americans no links to familial (or national) heritage. Theirs was a remoteness, then, also in terms of bordering the "other", the unknown. National expansionists had cited access to these bodies of water as part-justification for claiming Florida and, later, California, but those appeals were matched by queries about the worth of the territories.[81] In 1819, when the Senate debated the purchase of Florida from Spain, Virginia's John Randolph exclaimed, "What is Florida? A land of swamps, everglades, filled with frogs, tadpoles, snakes, terrapins, alligators, mosquitoes, gallinippers, and ague and fever! Why, sir, a man would not emigrate to that

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[79] Emphasis in original: J. S. Adams [State Commissioner of Immigration], *Florida: Its Climate, Soil and Productions* (New York: Fisher & Field, 1870), p. 57 [FSU].

[80] Andrew Rolle, *California – A History* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1969), pp. 14-15.

[81] Albert Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1935), pp. 49-54, 89.

country, even from purgatory!"[82] In 1850, meanwhile, even after the Gold Rush had demonstrated one obvious value to owning California, Daniel Webster – troubled by the potential expansion of slavery westward – opposed the admission of the territory into the Union largely on the grounds of its remoteness and inaccessibility.

The shared sense of remoteness manifested in other traits: ancestral, topographical, and climatic. Florida and California were former Spanish missionary colonies inextricably separate from – foreign to – America's celebrated origins. During the Revolution, Florida had been a loyalist stronghold, held by England before being re-ceded to Spain. Subsequently, Florida's unsettling presence as a foreign haven for runaway slaves spurred General Andrew Jackson's raids and the purchase of the territory from Spain. The Seminole Indians, an amalgamation of tribes which had entered Florida from neighbouring lands and numbered perhaps 5,000 in 1815, resisted American efforts to remove them to the West. Having mixed with runaway slaves, the Seminoles assumed a frightening reputation in the minds of whites – one which coloured conceptions of Florida. As Michael Paul Rogin has written, "An independent Florida was particularly dangerous," since "it contained a tribe of mixed Indians and Negroes which, in the whites' cultural nightmare, joined liberal black physical passion to Indian violence. The tropical Florida landscape seemed physically to embody" these worst fears of unbounded savagery and racial mixture.[83] Military conquest and removal of the majority of the Black and Indian Seminoles was achieved only after a series of wars from the 1820s to the 1850s, making Florida for decades a jungle

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[82] Senator John Randolph quoted in Helen Harcourt, *Home-Life in Florida* (Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1889), p. 22 [FAU].

[83] Michael Paul Rogin, *Fathers and Children: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indian* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1991), p. 197.

battleground in the American imagination. As later promoters conceded, "For many years Florida was looked upon as unfit for human habitation…as a vast expanse of swamp and poor lands, the real home of alligators, snakes, deadly insects, and the Seminole Indian" – with the latter, evidently, not qualifying as human inhabitants.[84]

California appeared nearly as foreign. Ownership of the territory passed from Spain to Mexico in 1821 and, by the time of the Mexican-American War, California possessed a population of some 15,000 persons of Spanish heritage and language. After American annexation was confirmed with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, these Californios and Mexicans became an internally colonised people, economically and socially disenfranchised through legislation like the 1851 Land Act and extralegal violence perpetrated by Anglo settlers.[85] Imperialistic rhetoric underpinned a political process of power displacement: California's Latin inhabitants were disdained by incoming whites as wasteful and improvident – in the words of one visitor, "an imbecile, pusillanimous, race of men, and unfit to control the destinies of that beautiful country."[86] Even more derogatory attitudes were expressed about California's Native American population, who were decimated even as they gave scant armed resistance, their numbers falling from 100,000 in 1850 to between thirty and fifty thousand by 1870.[87] Like the extant visions of Florida as a

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[84] "Florida and the High Cost of Living", *Florida Farmer and Homeseeker*, Vol. 26, No. 7 (July 1914), p. 190.

[85] Mark Rifkin, *Manifesting America: The Imperial Construction of U.S. National Space* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 149-196.

[86] T. J. Farnham, *Life, Adventures, and Travels in California* (New York: Nafis & Cornish, 1855), p. 363.

[87] Trudy Griffin-Pierce, *Native Americans: Enduring Cultures and Traditions* (New York: MetroBooks, 1996), p. 103.

malaria-infested swamp, meanwhile, Southern California was denigrated with almost equal disdain as a water- and worth- less land, dismissed in the East, as one booster recalled, as "a worthless and forbidding expanse of arid desert."[88] Like Florida, the strangeness of the environment suggested its unsuitability for that American prerequisite for settlement: agriculture. While either swamp or desert could be deemed tropical, neither represented an easy sell.

Lastly, Florida and California were remote from the "cold" Northern states in terms of possessing hotter, "winterless" climates. Prevalent notions regarding the interconnectedness of environment and the character of peoples made this a significant difference. Indeed, while it became a major selling point of both states, "climate" initially presented a problem for promoters who had to convince potential settlers that sun and heat did not presage enervation and degeneracy: a sapping of individual virtue fatal to civilised progress. The rhetoric of American expansion was predicated on "the ancient conviction that the temperate zone was the one proper field on which to raise an empire of Anglo-Saxon peoples," whose industrious traits had evolved in colder climates where soils required hard work, while warmer, southern climes contributed to the failings of Spanish-American republics and the supposed laziness of "tropical races".[89] Environmental influences merged with biological-racial factors to distinguish between a white "temperate" zone and a Latin-African "tropical" one, which fed into American political policy. In 1867, for example, Congress authorised the annexation of Alaska – a cold climate which, as

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[88] *California Souvenir Views: A Collection of 64 Views of California and Arizona* (Los Angeles: B. R., 1902) [UCLA].

[89] Eric T. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 31.

Harvard biologist Louis Agassiz wrote, would allow for "settlement by our race" – but rejected William Henry Seward's attempts to obtain the Caribbean island of St. Thomas. Henry Adams observed that the American government had established its own policy regarding expansion which could be reduced to the pithy formula: "No annexation in the tropics".[90] Precisely where California and Florida fitted into this discourse was unclear since their "southern" climes, Spanish pasts, multiracial populations, and closeness to Latin America blurred the fundamental fact of American statehood. But if the environmental aspects of their remoteness were largely immovable, other, man-made factors were not. In the late 1860s, technological and political developments, respectively, brought California and Florida "closer" to the rest of America, initiating their promotional re-inventions as semi-tropical states.

Wild & Woolly West: California

California's remoteness was diminished with the completion of the transnational railroad in 1869. While Florida had been crippled by the Civil War, California profited as the conflict enabled federal passage of the Pacific Railroad Bill, which had previously been held back by southern objections. Beforehand, a land journey from the East took several months and, often, lives, while sea voyages around Cape Horn or via Panama could be lengthier and deadlier.[91] After the Central and Union Pacific railroads met at Promontory Peak, Utah, they created the new reality, for those who could afford it, of travelling from New York to

[90] Love, *Race over Empire*, pp. 32, 28.

[91] Kevin Starr, *Americans and the California Dream*, pp. 52-3.

the Pacific Coast in seven days, and in the comfort of a Pullman carriage.[92] The companies behind California's Central Pacific and Southern Pacific railroads, moreover, obtained large tracts of federally-granted state lands which they sought to sell to Easterners and Midwesterners. Along with the newly-formed private promotional organ, the California Immigrant Union, the railroads began issuing pamphlets designed to attract home-seekers and visitors to California.[93]

The immediate effects of the transnational railroad on California were far from the optimistic forecasts which preceded it, however. The scheme's promoters had promised a tide of migrants and prosperity but instead the "great national highway" ushered in a glut of goods from Eastern cities, as the Suez Canal siphoned off much of the anticipated trade between Europe and the Orient, and the railroad created a financial depression in California.[94] As Stephen Powers reported in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "It was expected that the railroad would bring the starving East and Europe to California for land; but the first and greatest thing it had to do was to carry homesick California to the East on a visit."[95] The depression impelled the formation of the California Immigrant Union (CIU), a group of San Francisco businessmen under the presidency of Caspar T. Hopkins who lamented

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[92] Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 60-6.

[93] Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, pp. 105, 133.

[94] Walton Bean, *California: An Interpretive History* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1978), pp. 182-3.

[95] Stephen Powers, "California Saved", *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 28, No. 169 (November 1871), p. 602.

California's "shrunken and shrivelled" condition.[96] Recalling Thomas Paine's famous Revolution-era tract, Hopkins and the CIU published a pamphlet entitled "Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question," in which they set out the core issues at stake over California's "political economy" and future civilisation.[97]

The state's mining origins were deemed central to the socioeconomic malaise. The mining craze spawned by the discovery of gold in 1848, it was explained, had thoroughly skewed development, producing an errant society in which "restlessness" was endemic. California resembled a poster-child for the rootless communities of the "wild and woolly" West – a bonanza frontier from which people left as often as they arrived.[98] Writing that "mining for the precious metals was never heretofore the principal business of the Anglo-Saxon race, nor of any race claiming a higher rank than semi-civilisation," Hopkins asserted that mining had undermined California's social development. To be sure, its mining associations were not always viewed so negatively. As Carey McWilliams observed, it was primarily to the Gold Rush that the state owed its dramatic growth and eminent sense of exceptionalism.[99] The 1848 discovery of gold near Sutter's Mill and subsequent influx of prospectors indelibly linked California with democratic provisions of wealth and opportunity. Population swelled: within twelve months, the figure had soared

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[96] Caspar Hopkins, *Common Sense Applied to the Immigrant Question: Showing Why the California Immigrant Union was Founded and What It Expects To Do* (San Francisco: California Immigrant Union, 1869), p. 3 [SFPL].

[97] Ibid, pp. 4-6.

[98] Ibid, pp. 4, 17.

[99] Carey McWilliams, *California: The Great Exception* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949).

from 26,000, excluding Indians, to (briefly) 115,000.[100] Of these, possibly four-fifths were white Americans, mostly men, nearly half of whom engaged in mining. By the early 1850s, the ore was largely panned out of California's streams and mining became a capital-intensive industry, unprofitable for the average prospector.[101] Nevertheless, the impact of the Gold Rush was profound. The state obtained a large influx of migrants, a bustling port in San Francisco, and a plausible reputation as a modern-day El Dorado. Over the course of the 1850s California's per capita increase in population was over five times greater than that of Florida.

The Gold Rush, however, also imprinted onto California the stamp of frontier living – a sizeable problem for later promoters seeking migrants. High levels of violence plagued 1850s San Francisco, where criminal gangs made up of ex-prospectors clashed with a citizens' Committee of Vigilance in a period of urban lawlessness condemned by Eastern newspapers. Though hyperbolic, the words of one writer in 1860 were commonplace: San Francisco "had become synonymous for all that was most shameless in profligacy, for all that was basest in depravity, for all that was wanton and brutal in ruffianism," with property and life at constant risk.[102] Although the violence subsided and the committee disbanded, other chronic effects of the Gold Rush persisted. According to the CIU, "the hap-hazard life of the miner gave character to all branches of business," and, in the process, "the cheap land that might have grown through tillage into a fortune [was] forsaken for a squatter's chance on city lots" while "the slow, patient plodding of honest industry [was]

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[100] Rolle, *California*, p. 217.

[101] Ibid, pp. 217-232.

[102] W. F. Rae, *Westward by Rail* (London: Longmans Green & Co., 1870), pp. 264-265.

trampled…in the mad rush for chances in the lotteries of universal speculation".[103] The healthy progress and capital accumulation of a predominantly agricultural population had been impossible amid such an "eccentric beginning".[104] Populist literary accounts like Bret Harte's articles in the *Overland Monthly*, which glorified "the Western miner as an unkempt, bearded, red-shirted rowdy," only sustained undesirable links between California and the half-baked society of a mining frontier.[105] As a later migrant from Pennsylvania to San Diego recalled, tales of violence made Easterners "firmly convinced that California was a wild, far-off country, where a man could fill countless tooth-picks with gold dust; but where he was likely at any turn to be shot full of innumerable arrows – all poisoned, and where, after his murder, his beard would continue to grow."[106]

The other major issue for California's promoters was its Chinese population. While mining had produced a volatile society of speculators, the CIU explained, the railroads had introduced a disturbing racial element into the state. In the process of building their line, the Central Pacific imported thousands of Chinese workers, many of whom stayed on as labourers and servants. Coinciding with the depression, their presence sparked an intense anti-"coolie" movement by whites who saw the Chinese as a threat to their jobs, livelihood, and young society.[107] Hopkins linked this fear to the necessity of attracting white immigration to California. Conceding that the Chinese in "moderate" numbers had "proved

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[103] Hopkins, *Common Sense*, p. 4.

[104] Ibid, p. 16.

[105] Rolle, *California*, p. 270. Bean, *California*, pp. 154-5.

[106] Robert J. Gregg, "The Climatic Advantages of San Diego", *San Diego Union* (October 20, 1883), np [CSL Scrapbooks].

[107] Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*, pp. 60-100.

a serviceable makeshift" in terms of railroad construction and cheap labour, he warned that they put in jeopardy California's future.[108] Their "pecuniary" value "to the manufactures, agriculture, and public improvement of the State" was far outweighed by the damage they wrought as a heathen, un-assimilating population who were incapable of republican citizenship. Continued Chinese immigration (legitimised by the 1868 Burlingame Treaty) would, if unsurpassed by an influx of whites, create a desperately dangerous situation in which free and democratic institutions were in the hands of unfit peoples. Hopkins pointed to the "Spanish American provinces on this continent" for examples of precisely this dreaded outcome:

> Those countries, after years of colonial existence, all threw off the Spanish yoke. What did they gain by it? Though they *copied* from the United States the forms of a polity possessing no life to them, *because they were incapable of originating anything of the kind themselves*, they have none of them been able to preserve their liberties, in anything like an American sense, nor to keep the peace among themselves for ten years in succession.[109]

Republicanism succeeded or failed in relation to human and racial capabilities. "*A people naturally loving liberty can alone be expected to maintain it*," Hopkins wrote, just as "a people *incapable of desiring liberty for its own sake*, or whose history for ages proves

[108] Hopkins, *Common Sense*, p. 21.

[109] Emphasis in original: Ibid, p. 20.

that *its natural condition is that of submission to despotism, political, social, mental and religious*,…can never be expected to comprehend [the] *spirit*" of free government.[110] The dominant immigration to California would thus dictate its "preservation" as a republican society. A former Spanish province, like those to the south, California was different – "free" – because of an incipient Anglo-American population imbued with the "spirit" of republicanism. With growing internal alien races, however, the state was at risk from the phenomenon which afflicted Latin America. So was the American South. Pointing to the Reconstruction amendments, Hopkins observed that millions of "yet uneducated blacks…vote to-day throughout the whole South," a race the "masses" of whom "may safely be presumed incapable" of comprehending "that system of ideas constituting the American Government". The prospect of a similar eventuality in California – through the importation "by the hundred thousand" of Chinese peoples who would become the "permanent [and voting] majority" – portended disaster since neither "Chinese [n]or Negro…have ever been known to aspire to anything like the Anglo-Saxon idea of liberty or progress." Both races, he wrote, lacked "the doctrine of development [which] is the true American thought". "Caucasian" immigrants from the East Coast and Europe were thus desperately needed, not only to create a more stable society – founded upon agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing, rather than mining – but also to preserve in California the republican "spirit" of America.[111]

The transnational railroad brought these issues into sharper focus, reorienting California's relationship with the rest of the country. "Hitherto isolated," Hopkins noted,

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[110] Emphases in original: Hopkins, *Common Sense*, p. 20.

[111] Ibid, pp. 19-22.

"we are led for the first time in our existence…to look beyond the present moment, to study the past and contemplate the future, in order to derive" from the rest of the world "the facts and figures wherefrom to work out our own destiny."[112] Despite its initial negative effects, the railroad represented a crucial opportunity. Social improvement was achievable if promoters could attract a population "that shall come here for the sake of the advantages our State offers, independent of mining,…prepared to engage *permanently* in agriculture and manufactures,…[and] that shall *naturally become American citizens*".[113] The challenge lay in convincing such persons of California's worth, especially the benefits and profits it offered for Anglo-American civilisation.

Semi-Tropical California in Travel Guides

In 1872, Collis P. Huntington of the Southern Pacific Railroad commissioned the journalist Charles Nordhoff to tour California and produce a new, enticing description of the state. The railroad wanted to overturn, as Nordhoff put it, the fact that "California is to most Eastern people still a land of big beets and pumpkins, of rough miners, of pistols, bowie-knives, abundant fruit, queer wines, high prices – full of discomforts, and abounding in dangers to the peaceful traveller."[114] The book's title, *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence*, articulated the various goals of his sponsors: to encourage affluent invalids and pleasure-seekers who would buy train tickets, visit hotels, and perhaps return as residents, but also industrious settlers of various classes who would take up lands – raising their value

[112] Hopkins, *Common Sense*, pp. 3-4.

[113] Emphasis in original: Ibid, p. 18.

[114] Nordhoff, *California*, p. 18.

– and produce specialty crops to be shipped by the railroads.[115] Serialised in *Harpers* magazine and New York's *Tribune* and *Evening Post*, the book became a best-seller and spurred further revised editions. Nordhoff's writings on California were so renowned later promoters claimed they "have been read in almost every intelligent household in the United States," while the founders of a town in California's Ojai Valley named it after him.[116]

Tropicality shaped Nordhoff's vision of the Pacific state. Like Hopkins, he made critical comparisons with Latin America, while also injecting a powerful new term into this comparison: tropical. A passage from the book's preface (which is worth quoting at length) repositioned California from a declining mining frontier to a uniquely-rich natural resource which was for the first time undergoing "northern American" development:

> When a northern American visits a tropical country, be it Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, or Central America, he is delighted with the bright skies, the mild climate, the wonderful productiveness of the soil, and the novel customs of the inhabitants; but he is repelled by an enervating atmosphere, by the dread of malarious [sic] diseases, by the semi-barbarous habits of the people, and often by a lawless state of society. Moreover, he must leave his own country, and is without the comfort and security he enjoys at home. *California is our own; and it is the first tropical land which our race has thoroughly mastered and made itself at home in*. There, and there only, on this planet, the traveller and resident may enjoy the delights of the tropics, without their penalties; a mild climate, not enervating,

[115] Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, pp. 130-165.

[116] Walter Lindley & J. P. Widney, *California of the South – Its Physical Geography, Climate, Resources, Routes of Travel, and Health-Resorts* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1888), p. 280 [CSL].

> but healthful and health-restoring; a wonderfully and variously productive soil, without tropical malaria; the grandest scenery, with perfect security and comfort in travelling arrangements; strange customs, but neither lawlessness nor semi-barbarism.[117]

As the reference to tropical "penalties" attested, Nordhoff's appropriation of the word was something of a calculated gamble, forcing him to confront, and then dismiss, a whole range of fears relating to enervating air, degeneracy, disease, and "semi-barbarous habits". Why did Nordhoff evoke such a risky comparison, even when, with California considerably north of the Tropic of Cancer, it was a factually dubious one?

The italicised line in the above passage was the key. "California is our own," he wrote, "and it is the first tropical land which our race has thoroughly mastered and made itself at home in." The sentence epitomised the entire guidebook in marrying California's exotic natural characteristics to the stabilising forces of American control. Nordhoff's reference to "our race" made explicit his intended audience of white Americans, for whom California was the "first" land of its type to become a potential "home". If this implied that further "tropical lands" might eventually be mastered as well, it also reinforced popular conceptions of the tropics as currently unfit for white settlement. California was unique: a tropical land which was nonetheless "healthful" and "secure" for Anglo-Americans.

Nordhoff's background suggested a latent fascination with tropical lands which influenced this vision of California. After coming to America from Prussia as a boy and being orphaned, he served an apprenticeship in a printing house – an experience which

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[117] Emphasis added: Nordhoff, *California*, p. 11.

turned him away from the confinements of the office even as it introduced him to the lure of distant locales: "The perusal of books of travel had always given me great pleasure, and in them I had frequently read glowing accounts of the invigorating and restoring powers of sea air and tropical climes."[118] At fifteen he obtained a berth on an American naval ship, embarking on a voyage to Southeast Asia, the Hawaiian Islands, and California, then in the midst of the Mexican-American War. Like another seafaring visitor to the state, Richard Henry Dana, who commented "in the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be," Nordhoff saw Mexican California in terms of its natural potential going unrealised.[119] It was, he remembered, "a most unproductive or rather nothing-producing country – a great fertile waste in which everything would grow but nothing was…except, indeed, beef".[120]

Returning twenty-four years later, Nordhoff was a prominent American journalist with a penchant for travel pieces.[121] He was arguably most famous, however, for an article in the *North American Review* attacking urban corruption in Tweed-ring New York City.[122] Lamenting the "misgovernment" of Eastern cities predominantly by Irish emigrants – as well as a widening gap between "the very rich and the very poor; of idle, luxurious, over-

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[118] Kaori O'Connor, "Introduction" in Charles Nordhoff, *Nordhoff's West Coast: California, Oregon and Hawaii* (New York: K.P.I., 1987), pp. 5-6.

[119] Richard Henry Dana quoted in Stephanie Barron, Sheri Bernstein & Ilene Susan Fort, *Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity, 1900-2000*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), p. 51.

[120] O'Connor, *Nordhoff's West Coast*, p. 7.

[121] Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), pp. 25-6.

[122] Charles Nordhoff, "The Misgovernment of New York – A Remedy Suggested", *North American Review*, Vol. 113, No. 233 (October 1871), pp. 321-343.

cultivated, [and] poor, ignorant, and vicious people, together with a great mass of hard-working, poorly accommodated, struggling, honest men and women, living from hand to mouth" – Nordhoff espoused that "great cities are, so far, the curse and puzzle of our civilisation."[123] The remedy he proposed in the article was a restructuring of voting practices designed to prevent the influence of demagogues and return "wise" leaders to power – a policy, incidentally, advocated by conservatives troubled by Southern Reconstruction. Nordhoff took with him to California these concerns about the divisive influences of urban modernity upon "honest" Americans, and they contributed to his vision of an unprecedented tropical venture in California.

New railroad expansion within the state also encouraged him. By 1871, a Southern Pacific line snaked southward through the state's interior valleys, including the vast San Joaquin, into Southern California – a region pejoratively referred to as the "cow counties" by many Northern Californians due to the region's cattle *ranchos* of Spanish-Mexican origins. The tracks, which Nordhoff enthusiastically described, impelled an expansion of California's promotional efforts beyond the primacy of San Francisco and Northern California. Although Nordhoff praised San Francisco and the Sacramento Valley, it was Southern California which most intrigued him: "By reason of its fine healthful climate, its rich soil, and its remarkably varied products, [it] deserves the attention of farmers looking for pleasant homes and cheap and fertile lands, combined with a climate the best, probably, in the United States".[124] Comparatively under-settled, Southern California made plausible a tropical metaphor given its warmer climate, suitability for so-called "semi-tropical fruits,"

[123] Nordhoff, "The Misgovernment of New York", pp. 321-322.

[124] Nordhoff, *California*, p. 12.

and stronger ties to Mexico and Mexicans.[125] Southern California was also becoming home to small colonies of American settlers who were applying irrigation to arid lands. Through their efforts, Southern California would become "the real garden of the State".[126]

Nordhoff emphasised the redemptive potential of this "garden" for Americans through juxtaposition with social problems afflicting "old" cities in the East. He provided both "pull" and "push" factors for Easterners, which included ideas of racial and social order.[127] The guidebook featured a scathing appraisal of Eastern cities like New York, which were stifling, overcrowded, and being overrun by a "semi-barbarous foreign population" (especially, Irish) who were disturbingly influential in politics and society.[128] By contrast, California promised the fecundity of a "tropical" nature and climate – although importantly minus any "enervating" effects – and the state's "foreign" peoples posed no threat to Anglo authority. California's Indians were "a harmless and often a skilful labouring population, though somewhat slow," while the formerly-wealthy and powerful Californios were in terminal decline, a "natural" consequence of their improvidence. "They had none of the energy and ingenuity of civilised life. They merely lived; they planted no trees; they ploughed few fields; and a soil which is the richest in the world, and a climate in which the orange, the vine, the almond, and olive flourish, served them merely for

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[125] See the chapters "Southern California for Invalids", "Semi-Tropical Fruits in Southern California", and "A California Cattle Rancho": Nordhoff, *California*, pp. 109-117, 166-173, 238-246.

[126] Ibid, p. 128.

[127] For a discussion of "push" and "pull" factors in migration, see Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990), pp. 17-22.

[128] Nordhoff, *California*, p. 18.

pasture."[129] The guidebook thus fostered a colonialist view of Southern California which appeased Anglo anxieties about its remoteness. "To the settler from the far-off East," Nordhoff wrote, "it is an important advantage that California has, in a remarkable degree, a well-settled, orderly, and law-abiding population. Three races – the Indians, the old Spaniards, and we 'Americans' – live there harmoniously together."[130] Harmoniously but within a reassuringly defined hierarchy: "Being white, and of the superior race," Anglos "have the privilege of entering any Indian's house."[131] The guidebook assured readers that in semi-tropical California, as opposed to Eastern cities, Anglos held social and racial predominance, especially since the state's ethnic and racial "others" demonstrated the slow traits of "tropical races". The white settler was innately more energetic, although Nordhoff warned: "Let him only keep his Eastern habits of industry, and beware of the curse of California – idleness and unthrift – to which no doubt the mild climate predisposes men."[132]

Notably exempted from Nordhoff's statement about California's "three races" were the Chinese, whose presence unsettled him, perhaps because they had largely been introduced into California by his corporate employers. He was ambivalent about a people who were "alien from our manners, habits, [and] customs", but also "patient, respectful, extremely quick to learn, faithful to their instructions, and make no fuss." The Chinese had "endurance for any labour or climate" and might even "make…persistent toil once more fashionable among us [whites]," and he advised tourists to explore San Francisco's Chinatown, albeit warning of pervasive gambling and opium dens. In spite of these values,

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[129] Ibid, pp. 145-146.

[130] Nordhoff, *California*, p. 123.

[131] Ibid, p. 157.

[132] Ibid, p. 181.

however, the Chinese were inassimilable and heathen – a "disordering and disorganising [presence within] our own society". Concluding that "without Christianity, free government is impossible," Nordhoff echoed Hopkins' fear that the Chinese were a threat to republican California.[133]

He therefore looked beyond San Francisco, where the Chinese issue was most combustible, and focused his attention on Southern California. This enabled an alternative vision that Nordhoff evidently felt would appeal to Easterners – as it surely appealed to him – in which mining was a past chapter in state history, irrelevant given the fertile nature which only awaited industrious cultivation. The Old World "curses" of crowding and dependence which afflicted New York and the East could be exchanged for the "new" and "healthful" conditions of Southern California. The writer observed a colony of German migrants in Anaheim who had together purchased small tracts of land and begun cultivating vines and fruits. "The men are masters of their own lives; they have achieved independence, and what to an average New York mechanic would seem the ideal of a fortunate existence." With the Southern Pacific railroad making "three millions of acres open to settlement" in the San Joaquin Valley alone, the "Anaheim experiment" could be "successfully repeated in a hundred places in this State".[134] Colonies of white Americans were thus "mastering" tropical California, which, in turn, would produce better Americans, freed from the constraints of industrial society.

The vision of Americans benefitting from California's distinctive environment was reaffirmed by the journalist Benjamin Truman in an 1874 book also commissioned by the

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[133] Nordhoff, *California*, pp. 90-91.

[134] Ibid, p. 177.

Southern Pacific Railroad. Truman was a Union correspondent during the Civil War and advisor to President Andrew Johnson who moved to California in 1866, became owner of the *Los Angeles Star*, and fell in love with Southern California as a "second Eden". Claiming that "Eastern people know nothing of this Paradise of the Occident," Truman's first booster work, *Semi-Tropical California*, sought to combat this ignorance and asserted the tropical aspects emphasised by Nordhoff – with one alteration.[135] Proclaiming a land "which offers so many and such varied inducements to men in search of homes and health," Truman felt the region was "entitled to the appellation of 'Semi-Tropical California'," by which he meant portions of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties, but with a particular focus on Los Angeles County and the nearby San Gabriel Valley.[136] By adding the "semi," Truman qualified Nordhoff's tropical comparison – a qualifier which would thereafter appear with far greater frequency as a descriptive term in Southern California promotion. For boosters like Truman, "Semi-Tropical" suggested a sanitised version of a tropical land, stripped of the un-progressive qualities of more southern climes and conducive to Anglo-American settlement and progress.

Having worked as a journalist for the New York *Times*, Philadelphia *Press*, Washington *Chronicle*, and San Francisco *Bulletin*, Truman's background gave clout to his guidebook and its stated object "to bring permanently into notice the county of Los Angeles [and] Semi-tropical California". He described himself as "a writer of acknowledged

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[135] Gary F. Kurutz, *Benjamin C. Truman: California Booster & Bon Vivant* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1984), p. 24.

[136] Major Benjamin C. Truman, *Semi-Tropical California: Its Climate, Healthfulness, Productiveness, and Scenery* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Company, 1874), p. 12 [BL].

reliability" and claims of "nothing but facts" preceded his depiction of Semi-Tropical California as a place where "with a small capital, industry and economy, forty, twenty, ten acres of land, will in time yield an income greater than can be derived from an equal space in any other locality." The region's remoteness meant it was untouched by the social problems of the Northeast and social mobility was eminently attainable. "Look this way, ye seekers after homes and happiness!" Truman proselytised, "ye honest sons of toil, and ye *pauvres miserables* who are dragging out a horrible life in the purlieus of large eastern cities! Semi-tropical California welcomes you all."[137]

Anglo-American ascendancy, meanwhile, was stressed in his treatment of California's Spanish-Mexican population. The latter were associated with a pre-modern past, a "romantic glamour" which "overhangs the region".[138] Truman both romanticised and marginalised Mexicans. Los Angeles "and its vicinity thronged with memories of a by-gone age, and a population of foreign habits and birth, [which] presents a number of interesting features for examination not to be found elsewhere, and well worthy of careful inspection."[139] But the state had been redeemed from native sloth by the arrival of the "Anglo-Saxon pioneer":

> I first visited Los Angeles in 1867. Crooked, ungraded, unpaved streets; low, lean, rickety, adobe houses,…and here and there an indolent native, hugging the inside of a blanket, or burying his head in a gigantic watermelon, were the, then, most notable features of this quondam Mexican town. But a wonderful

[137] Truman, *Semi-Tropical California*, p. 29.

[138] Ibid, p. 14.

[139] Ibid, p. 27.

> change has come over the spirit of its dream, and Los Angeles is at present – at least to a great extent – an American city.[140]

The image of a Mexican "native" gorging on a huge fruit was emblematic of the twin offspring of tropicality: bounty and lethargy. The modern Los Angeles of improved roads and buildings, conversely, was efficient and "American", offering the fruits without the indolence. Truman stressed the "impetus given [to] commerce and agriculture…by the American and European element".[141] California's legacies of conquest served as a romantic backdrop which highlighted the progressive contributions of Anglo-Americans.

Semi-tropical California offered renewed healthfulness as well as wealth. Like Nordhoff, Truman emphasised the benefits of the climate for Eastern invalids, who usually went to Florida, Cuba, or Southern Europe in search of restoration. Southern California, he wrote, was preferable to all of these, since Florida and Cuba, like Italian resorts, were "covered with a rank, rich growth of tropical vegetation, saturated always with moisture, and undergoing a constant and rapid decomposition".[142] He cited fellow promoter Major William McPherson who contrasted the healthful atmosphere of California with that of Florida, where the popular resort of St. Augustine was "too warm in summer, and too damp throughout the year; and…the combination of heat and moisture produces malaria, with all its attendant and ever-ready agents, to conspire against health and life."[143] Truman thus managed to evoke some of the negative attributes of tropicality – dampness and decay – to

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[140] Truman, *Semi-Tropical California*, p. 27.

[141] Ibid, p. 26.

[142] Ibid, p. 46.

[143] Major William McPherson, quoted in Ibid, p. 38.

denigrate Florida, even as he cited the "semi-tropical" benefits of California. His stance anticipated the constructed notions of semi-tropical states, in which, unlike Florida, "Semi-tropical California…has a dry, clear, bracing, and invigorating atmosphere."[144] Ailing bodies could find rejuvenation in such an environment, which was unmatched within America. Comparison with Florida thus fed into Southern California's emerging status as an exceptional region. Truman's guidebook declared, "Los Angeles County (the heart of Semi-tropical California) has no equal in the world."[145]

Sleepy & Swampy South: Florida

While semi-tropical imagery applied to an American state asserted its distinctiveness from the North and Midwest, that very distinctiveness also encouraged links to emerge between California and Florida, where promoters faced the issue of remoteness. Before the 1870s, Florida's remoteness was not only environmental but political – the state having seceded to join the Confederacy in 1861 and fought against the Union in the Civil War. With the exception of the 1864 Battle of Olustee, the war was fought outside of Florida, but the state nonetheless suffered the wounds of the defeated South, including an end to its antebellum socioeconomic foundation: slavery.[146] Like the rest of the South, Florida was left financially ravaged after the war and rife with sectional antipathies. Railroad projects initiated in the previous decade were dead, leaving the state with sparse transportation

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[144] Truman, *Semi-Tropical California*, p. 46.

[145] Ibid, p. 12.

[146] For the post-war South's socioeconomic problems, see Howard Rabinowitz, *The First New South, 1865-1920* (Arlington Heights: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 1992), pp. 2-37.

facilities with which to attract settlers or investors.[147] The war had also crippled capital in Florida, where the average value of a farm dropped from $2,502 in 1860 to $777 in 1870.[148] A desperate need to bring in new settlers and fresh wealth gripped the broken state. As George Pozzetta writes, "In no other period of Florida's past…have residents of the state attempted to entice settlers southward with a greater sense of urgency and need than in the decades following the Civil War."[149]

The end of the state's political exile aided this cause. In 1868 Florida was readmitted to the Union under Congressional Reconstruction and one year later the state's Republican government created the position of Commissioner of Lands and Immigration, with the first appointee, J. S. Adams, "entrusted [with] the oversight and promotion of immigration" to Florida.[150] In an early pamphlet, Adams wrote optimistically that "when the inducements of various kinds which Florida holds out to immigration shall be fully known in other sections of the country, it is confidently anticipated that a tide of population from all sections will flow in."[151] This required confronting and overcoming long-standing American objections to the peninsular state, however. As Adams acknowledged, for potential migrants "some little knowledge of the history of Florida is indispensable to a

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[147] Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 191-92, 221-238.

[148] *Historical Statistics of the United States – Millennial Edition – Vol. 4 – Economic Sectors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 4-61.

[149] George E. Pozzetta, "Foreigners in Florida: A Study of Immigration Promotion, 1865-1910", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (October 1974), p. 165.

[150] Adams, *Florida*, p. 3.

[151] Ibid, p. 14.

right understanding and appreciation of her present condition." Or, "if Florida has such a desirable climate and such a variety and power of vegetable growth 'why are there not more people there?' is an inevitable question."[152]

The second-biggest state east of the Mississippi, Florida had the second-smallest population in 1870.[153] Peripheral to the cotton-belt South, it had been acutely under-populated even before the Civil War wiped out 15,000 of its white male citizens. In 1860, Florida's population was 140,424; neighbouring Alabama and Georgia had 964,201 and 1,057,286 people, respectively.[154] Various factors contributed to this scant settlement, including slavery, the Seminole Wars, and the natural environment. Legalised slavery in Florida dissuaded Northern settlers reared on republicanism and free labour ideals who instead flooded westward to claim land.[155] John Lee Williams was an exception to this trend. Coming to Florida in the 1820s for his health, Williams settled in St. Augustine and helped to select Tallahassee as the capital.[156] In his 1837 book, *The Territory of Florida*, he stressed the extent to which slavery cast a pall over his adopted home. The close of the latest Indian war had left rich abandoned lands in Northern Florida, available at prices cheaper than in the North or West, which should attract "northern farmers, mechanics and

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[152] Adams, *Florida*, p. 6.

[153] Delaware was the least populated.

[154] *Historical Statistics of the United States – Vol. 1*, pp. 1-180, 1-213, 1-217.

[155] On the struggles of Southern states in attracting immigrants, see C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), pp. 60-1, 86-9.

[156] Maurice O'Sullivan & Jack C. Lane (eds.), *The Florida Reader: Visions of Paradise from 1530 to the Present* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, Inc., 1991), p. 76.

merchants" as well as Southerners.[157] Yet, Williams wrote, "many Europeans, as well as inhabitants of the northern states, object to live in a slave holding country, and we must grant that slavery is an evil."[158] For Northerners, labour was degraded in a slave-based country, and they held, as an unnamed writer later observed, to "the maxim that slavery begot ignorance, and gave the lie to republican freedom both in a moral and a political sense."[159]

But slavery was also legal in Georgia and Alabama and those states were far more populated than Florida. The peninsular state's fearsome environment – a product of both its Indian Wars and proximity to the tropics – further hindered Florida. Unlike other Southeastern states where Indian Removal was largely, and brutally, achieved in the 1830s, Florida as Adams wrote had been "harassed and plundered by repeated Indian wars from 1816 to 1858".[160] The Seminole Indians, a mixed-race band due to unions with runaway slaves, became for whites a terrific symbol of the "savage" wildness of Florida. The narrator of an 1882 novel set in the antebellum period thus responded to medical advice to relocate to Florida with the lament, "Don't send me down among the Indians and negroes to be scalped and massacred."[161] Seminole guerrilla resistance to federal efforts to remove them to the West was only overcome after recurrent wars that lasted until the eve of the Civil War, when perhaps two hundred Seminoles still lived in Florida, retreating to the Everglades where they eked out a survival in island dwellings. Later Anglo promoters

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[157] John Lee Williams, *The Territory of Florida* (1837) reproduced in O'Sullivan, *Florida Reader*, pp. 76-7.

[158] Ibid, p. 77.

[159] "The Solid South and the Bloody Shirt", *Californian*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1880), p. 143.

[160] Adams, *Florida*, p. 7.

[161] Ellen Call Long, *Florida Breezes* (Jacksonville: Ashmead Bros. Printers, 1882), p. 1.

would strive, with great success, to absorb the Seminoles into Florida's promotional imagery, as tourist attraction and wilderness symbol. For most of the nineteenth century, however, when its wilderness was still a fearsome unknown, Florida's Native Americans were a major factor in why whites avoided the state.

The other was the state's supposedly swamp-like terrain and hot climate. Florida's innumerable lakes and rivers and humid atmosphere suggested to many a hotbed for sickness. Even Southern planters were wary of the peninsula and stuck to a thin strip of counties hugging the Georgia border. "I confess I am afraid of these climates so near the tropics," confided a North Carolina planter in 1831 to a nephew bound for Florida, where "the fevers are always formidable."[162] Such testaments reflected an internal contradiction in the idea of Florida: a destination for invalids seeking a restorative climate as well as a land of deathly swamps. Williams' view was typically ambiguous: "A southern climate is not necessarily a sickly one. Florida is undoubtedly as healthy as New York." Yet, he continued, while "it is much more congenial to feeble constitutions," it was "perhaps, to the robust…too debilitating," with "situations where stagnant waters and a luxuriant vegetation, usually produce fevers."[163]

The physical lethargy symptomatic of malaria and similar diseases was expanded into social traits attributed to all inhabitants of hotter climes. For Northerners the South and Latin America were home to "sleepy" populations demonstrably lacking the energetic qualities of the virtuous citizenry of colder climes. This dictated labour relations in hot climates. As Thomas Jefferson had written in *Notes on Virginia*, labour in a sun-rich

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[162] Quoted in Edward E. Baptist, *Creating an Old South: Middle Florida's Plantation Frontier before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 27.

[163] Williams, *Territory of Florida*, in O'Sullivan, *Florida Reader*, p. 77.

environment had to be coerced since "in a warm climate, no man will labour for himself who can make another labour for him."[164] The landed expansion of southern plantation slavery had seemed to confirm for Yankees that a sun-rich climate provoked the degeneration of individual energy and created something fatal to democracy: a two-tier society. With the southernmost reaches of continental America, Florida was hit hard by these assumptions. Trying to overturn the association between climate and slavery, Williams nearly reaffirmed it: "We want industrious and enterprising men and women to come among us,…to prove that white men, although they may not bear the burning rays of the sun as well as negroes, yet that by order, system and economy, they can accomplish more in one day, than a slave will accomplish in a week."[165] Antebellum Florida thus appeared a sleepy and swampy slave state – worth visiting only if one was too weak to survive another Northern winter.

These were the antebellum legacies faced by the new Commissioner of Immigration in 1869, and they were compounded by Reconstruction. In Adams' words, post-war Florida was under "the political ideas of a triumphant radicalism," which – after the 1865 Black Codes created by Southern whites to maintain control over the freedmen had contributed to a congressional backlash – saw federal attempts to ensure the civil rights of emancipated African Americans.[166] Blacks voted for and took part in Republican governments which held power in Florida until 1876. In part because of this, Reconstruction antagonised North-South tensions. White Southerners resented African Americans' new importance as voting

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[164] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, quoted in David L. Smiley, "The Quest for the Central Theme in Southern History," *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Summer 1972), p. 310.

[165] Williams, *Territory of Florida*, in O'Sullivan, *Florida Reader*, p. 77.

[166] Adams, *Florida*, p. 14.

citizens and political officers, which they saw as the manipulated result of overbearing federal power. White Northerners considering Florida for settlement, in turn, had to consider potential Southern reprisals against them as hated "carpetbaggers". Moreover, racism was strong in the North as well as in the South, and the presence of emancipated African Americans who were at least *de jure* social equals under the federal constitutional amendments represented further cause for concern among whites. Adams did not ignore these significant "social [and political] conditions" nor the fact that "much bitterness of feeling" born out of the South's rebellion remained. He did argue, however, and with some justification, that of the Southern states Florida was the least troubled by such "bitterness", as it was less populated or shaped by antebellum factors. It represented the newest part of the New South. "Florida, though in fact an old State, has all the characteristics of an entirely new-settled State."[167]

Much like Caspar Hopkins in California, then, Adams accepted that certain historical factors had damaged his state's development at the same time that he envisaged a better future enabled by the arrival of enterprising whites. Florida, he posited, was especially capable of improvement because of rare qualities of soil and climate, which, by attracting settlers from the North and Midwest, would redeem its social inadequacies. "Strong immigration of new men, with new views and new desires," would provide "the means of gratifying the social needs of a progressive society."[168] Enticing this "strong immigration," however, first meant constructing positive visions of a state which had long disturbed Anglo-Americans through its tropical and racial characteristics.

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[167] Adams, *Florida*, pp. 12-16.

[168] Ibid, p. 13.

Semi-Tropical Florida in Travel Guides

Celebrated writers were crucial to the positive new vision of Florida, led by Harriet Beecher Stowe and her 1873 guidebook, *Palmetto Leaves*. Published the same year as Charles Nordhoff's *California*, Stowe's work was less overtly promotional, since it was unsanctioned by any railroad, but the author possessed a booster's faith in Florida, contributing to state annuals and for a price posing on her porch for steamships carrying tourists down the St. Johns River.[169] Moreover, while Nordhoff was a travel reporter describing the West Coast, Stowe was a writer-in-residence in Mandarin, Florida, on the banks of the St. Johns River, where, after the Civil War, she purchased a farm and orange grove and spent the winters of her later years, touring north-eastern Florida and writing pieces for Northern magazines.[170] Many of these articles were responses to the "quantities of letters from persons of small fortunes" Stowe received "asking [for] advice whether they had better move to Florida," and in 1873 a collection was published as a book. *Palmetto Leaves* read as a paean to the healthful "outdoorness" of Florida, where, she explained, Yankee invalids, tourists, and settlers could enjoy "winter in a semi-tropical region".[171]

Palmetto Leaves has been largely overlooked by scholars, including Stowe's biographers.[172] One provides a single paragraph on the book, noting that the "collection of

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[169] See the "Introduction" by Stowe in C. K. Munroe (ed.), *The Florida Annual – Impartial and Unsectional, 1885* (New York, 1885), pp. 6-7 [UF]. O'Sullivan, *Florida Reader*, p. 140.

[170] Harriet Beecher Stowe, "Our Florida Plantation", *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 43, No. 259 (May 1879), pp. 641-650.

[171] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves* (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co., 1873), pp. 35-38.

[172] See Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 338. It even receives scant analysis in a book about Stowe's time in Florida: see John T. Foster, Jr. & Sarah Whitmer

sketches and essays" "not only…[became] an overnight best-seller," but spurred a large increase in the number of Northerners visiting Florida and contributed to a doubling in real estate prices around Mandarin.[173] The meagre treatment afforded the text reflects the fact that, in terms of the author's life and works, *Palmetto Leaves* is fairly easily bypassed. Stowe has been and surely always will be predominantly remembered for her 1853 novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which exposed to a mass readership the brutalities of Southern slavery and strengthened the abolitionist cause. But her influence on Northern attitudes towards the South did not end with emancipation or Appomattox. Indeed, the author's celebrity amplified the importance of her later works – like *Palmetto Leaves*, which, as an account of Stowe's experiences in a Southern state, indicated for her Northern readership the progress made in the post-war process of sectional reconciliation.[174] Following *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, after all, the author had been cursed in the antebellum South, her book labelled by the *Southern Literary Messenger* a "criminal prostitution of the truth".[175] Now living half the year in an ex-Confederate state – and writing about it in largely, if not entirely, positive terms – Stowe ameliorated some of the Yankee concerns about the New South.

Her very presence in Florida was used to promote the state to Northerners. Pamphlets by Florida land companies in the 1880s declared that "such a noted person as

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Foster, *Beechers, Stowes, and Yankee Strangers: The Transformation of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999).

[173] Noel B. Gerson, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Biography* (New York: Praeger, 1976), p. 192.

[174] For an analysis of the ongoing process of sectional reconciliation, including the importance of tourism, see Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

[175] Quotation in O'Sullivan, *Florida Reader*, p. 140.

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, the famous author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, has spent half of her life in this State, and has one of the best orange groves in Florida, yielding her a handsome annual income."[176] But it was her descriptions in *Palmetto Leaves* which were most influential in shaping Northern conceptions of Florida and attracting visitors to the much-maligned state. An 1887 guidebook thus hailed *Palmetto Leaves* as "the means of causing many [Northerners] to establish winter homes in sunny Florida."[177]

As the reference to "winter homes" would suggest, the book was aimed at the wealthy. Stowe's Florida was "peculiarly adapted to the needs of people who can afford two houses, and want a refuge from the drain that winter makes on the health."[178] This approach reflected a different class dynamic to Nordhoff's vision of California as a place where enterprising Yankees could make independent fortunes. Stowe's was a less inclusive vision, addressed specifically to already-affluent Northerners, which gave to Florida a more narrowly defined appeal. In some passages, Stowe even warned against permanent residency in the state, particularly for Americans ill-suited to hot summers when malaria was a danger.[179] The guidebook thus contributed to Florida's emergence as a winter resort rather than a destination for year-round living.

Stowe, however, was fascinated with Florida's tropicality, even if she was guarded about the "tropical" comparisons appearing in other promotional texts about the state. Dr.

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[176] *Florida, the Land of Sunshine, Oranges, and Health* (Chicago: Belmore Florida Land Company, 1885), p. 1 [UF].

[177] Oliver Martin Crosby, *Florida Facts both Bright and Blue: A Guide Book to Intending Settlers, Tourists, and Investors, From a Northerner's Standpoint* (New York: South Pub. Co., 1887), p. 85 [UWF].

[178] Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, p. 38.

[179] On the dangers of malaria in Florida summers, see Ibid, pp. 129-30.

Baynard Byrne, for example, a Northerner whose letters comparing Florida favourably with Texas formed an 1866 collection, had proclaimed the tropical attractions of Florida for health-seekers and agriculturists.[180] For Stowe, this could be misleading given Northeastern Florida's winter appearance, which tended toward a sandy flatness with coarse grass, pine-trees, and occasional frosts: "Tourists and travellers generally come with their heads full of certain romantic ideas of waving palms, orange-groves, flowers, and fruit, all bursting forth in tropical abundance; and, in consequence, they go through Florida with disappointment at every step."[181] Nevertheless she filled her guidebook with references to the tropical "romance" of Florida. "Spring is a glory anywhere, but, as you approach the tropics, there is a vivid brilliancy, a burning tone, to the colouring, that is peculiar." Florida belonged to America yet offered escape from it, too: respite for Northerners suffering from cold, consumption, or "nervous excitability".[182] The state was alluringly unrefined, a place where civilised customs were only imported. If drawn, "we should not represent [Florida] as a neat, trim damsel, with starched linen cuffs and collar," but "a brunette, dark but comely, with gorgeous tissues, a general disarray and dazzle, and with a sort of jolly untidiness, free, easy, and joyous."[183] Environmental foreignness tied Florida to the tropics but this made it an enticing prospect for Stowe.

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[180] "Letter No. 2, Gainesville, Fla. April 6, 1860", in Dr. Baynard Byrne, M.D., *Florida and Texas – A Series of Letters Comparing the Soil, Climate, and Productions of These States* (Ocala: East Florida Banner Office, 1866) [FSU].

[181] Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, p. 26.

[182] Ibid, pp. 140, 128.

[183] Ibid, p. 36.

Tropical traits simultaneously supported Florida's appearance as a desirable post-war destination for African Americans, however. In the late-1860s, African Americans migrated to Florida from Georgia and the Carolinas in search of better socioeconomic opportunities.[184] Ambrose Douglass, a freedman in North Carolina, recalled how, after the Confederate surrender, "I was 21 when freedom finally came, and that time I didn't take no chances on 'em taking it back again. I lit out for Florida."[185] The under-populated nature of the state combined with its proximity to the Caribbean suggested a haven for blacks in America. Beliefs in climatic determinism crossed the colour line, as African Americans imagined Florida in tandem with the Caribbean, as a state set to become home to blacks in part because of its tropical characteristics. An African American reporter from the North wrote in 1872, "Florida is destined to become the Negro's new Jerusalem. Her close proximity to Cuba, Hayti [sic] and Jamaica, makes her the great gateway between the negro tropical belt and the great Temperate Zone of the white race in the United States…Here then the oppressed coloured people of Georgia and intelligent and well-to-do coloured men of the North must come and pitch their tents."[186] Once in this "new Jerusalem", however, African Americans faced concerted efforts by Florida whites who strived to reclaim social, political, and economic domination over blacks during the flux of Reconstruction.[187] As

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[184] Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Knopf, 1979), pp. 308-309.

[185] Ambrose Douglass, quoted in Ibid, p. 177.

[186] "From the Land of Flowers", *Christian Recorder* (December 28, 1872) in Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organising and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 18.

[187] Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed*, pp. 2-50.

Eric Foner writes, "Florida, with more available land and a higher proportion of black landowners than other Southern states, saw the [Ku Klux] Klan direct much of its activity against economically independent freedmen."[188]

Scholars have overlooked the ironic fact that promoters of Florida – whites who were usually complicit with racial subjugation – appropriated the potentially subversive idea of Florida as a tropical "gateway" which was being advocated contemporaneously by African Americans. If "tropical" suggested to some a "negro belt" (as, for Nordhoff, it suggested Latin America), how could white promoters employ the term so explicitly in their own literature? The answer is that, after the Civil War and with slavery fresh in mind, they did so only hesitantly. The process of claiming Florida's "tropical" benefits for whites was piecemeal, extending to health and tourism more than agriculture. Florida's attractions were best enjoyed as a winter visitor, Stowe wrote, since "no white man" could be expected to work there all summer. Settlers from the North sometimes needed "an attack of malarial fever or two to teach him that he cannot labour the day through under a tropical sun as he can in the mountains of New Hampshire." The Florida frontier thus appeared markedly different from those celebrated western frontiers (and even Southern California) which were associated with independent white settlers carving livelihoods from the wilderness. This frontier was tropicalised: it grew with a "tropical rapidity" and visitors ought to beware of "the fiercest extremes of tropical temperature".[189] Common sense dictated that whites could not labour persistently and profitably under such foreign conditions.

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[188] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 429

[189] Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, pp. 243, 284, 286.

This posed a serious question about the progress of Florida under free labour. As Stowe wrote, "Who shall do the work for us?...in this new State, where there are marshes to be drained, forests to be cut down, palmetto-plains to be grubbed up, and all under the torrid heats of a tropical sun."[190] The answer she provided saw *Palmetto Leaves* conclude with a lengthy discussion of the prospects of post-war Florida and African Americans in terms of free labour. A fierce opponent of slavery, Stowe (unlike many white Southerners in Florida) saw emancipation as an unremitting good; but the specific meaning of "free labour" was another matter. As historians have shown, competing notions of what free labour meant, as it applied to the freedmen, were fundamental to the entire Reconstruction project. The definition itself was in flux: many white Northerners and the freedmen defined freedom as being able to reap the fruit of their own labour, which could best be accomplished by owning their own land.[191] In this republican view, African Americans possessed the thrift and enterprise to succeed as independent labourers. But, as Radical Republicans proposed small land parcels to be provided for the freedmen, they met fierce opposition from white Southerners and conservative Northerners on both ideological and material grounds, due to the contrasting view that African Americans, as former slaves possessing inferior capabilities, were fundamentally unfit for the independence of land ownership and needed to be taught how to work.[192]

Stowe's *Palmetto Leaves* fell closer to the latter view. African Americans, she wrote, were "the natural labourer[s] of tropical regions" – but "natural" in terms of being good manual workers rather than enterprising farmers capable of producing crops on their

[190] Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, p. 279.

[191] Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 46-48.

[192] Ibid, pp. 46-48.

own land.[193] In this colonialist approach white expansion into Florida depended, to some degree, on African Americans, but with the latter limited to the roles of grunt workers under Anglo direction. Happily for a white employer like Stowe, "the black labourers whom we leave in the field pursue their toil, if any thing, more actively, more cheerfully, than during the cooler months. The sun awakes all their vigour and all their boundless jollity."[194] Indeed, African Americans – rather than the divisive social danger envisioned by many Southern whites – represented a kind of ideal agricultural proletariat: contented, subject, and suited to the tropical conditions. A captain surveying Florida's "swamps and lagoons" – whose crew was entirely African American – had taught Stowe that "the negro constitution enabled them to undergo with less suffering and danger the severe exposure and toils of the enterprise," while the "good nature which belonged to the race made their toils seem to sit lighter upon them than upon a given number of white men." Wealthy Northerners considering Florida for leisure or investment could take note of the fact that the captain "valued [his crew] for their docility, and perfect subjection to discipline." African Americans were even preferred to the "lower classes at the North" as being "more obedient, better natured, more joyous, and easily satisfied."[195]

Stowe thus described Florida's development in colonialist rather than republican terms. The core question she posed – "Who shall do the work for us?" – was essentially a betrayal of the free labour ideology. Since "us" presumably meant Northern (and, perhaps, Southern) whites, the terminology applied otherness to those would "do the work *for*" incoming Anglo-Americans. Similar to Nordhoff's use of "we 'Americans'," Stowe fixed

[193] Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, p. 283.

[194] Ibid, p. 280.

[195] Ibid, pp. 284-285.

identity and role along racial lines. Moreover, despite her anti-slavery crusading, she exhibited a strong tendency to compare African Americans in Florida to animals. Cudjo, encountered at Mandarin wharf, was "misshapen, and almost deformed…black as night itself; and but for a glittering, intellectual eye, he might have been taken for a big baboon, – the missing link of Darwin."[196] Simon, labouring under a scorching sun, had "a boiling spring of animal content…ever welling up within," while, at Fernandina, Stowe witnessed a "low, squat giant of a fellow, with the limbs and muscles of a great dray-horse".[197] Dehumanised into muscular workhorses, these freedmen promised the tropical labour which whites could not themselves perform, but as thoughtless agents of the "civilising" processes of growth which whites oversaw and benefited from. Stowe's depiction of African Americans as "contented" field workers who enabled Anglo development of Florida reached a Northern public already tired at the length and expense of Reconstruction.[198] Coming from the famous abolitionist author it resonated with white Northern suspicions that the Reconstruction goals of racial equality were misguided, if not "unnatural," not least in a "tropical" land where nature dictated different roles for the two races.

Published in book-form in 1875, Edward King's *The Southern States of America* was another travel guide by a Yankee author which imagined Florida in tropical terms. King was a well-known writer who was employed by *Scribner's* magazine to produce a series of articles on the post-war South, where he travelled in 1873 and 1874. While not sponsored by any railroad, his guidebook was imbued with booster rhetoric, as he

[196] Stowe, *Palmetto Leaves*, p. 269.

[197] Ibid, pp. 281, 282.

[198] Foner, *Reconstruction*, p. 449.

proclaimed that "there are so many superior inducements offered by the peninsula to those in search of new abiding-places".[199] Following Stowe's example, King saw "sub-tropical" Florida as somewhere at once foreign to but being re-shaped by white Northerners. In Jacksonville, "the North has swept on in such a resistless current that, so far as its artificial features are concerned, the city has grown up according to the New England pattern, though foliage, climate, sun – all these are the antipodes of those of the North!"[200] Florida's natural remoteness was thus welded to the "advent of ambitious Northerners" who, since the end of the war, headed south in search of health, orange-growing, or the "phantom Pleasure". Again like Stowe, King expressed fears about the state's wilderness in the summer. Potential settlers were warned of the "danger of malarial disease" and "the black swamp canal…[which] sends up a fetid odour of decay." December to April was described as malaria free, however, and King cast Florida as "our new winter paradise," linking the peninsula's climate with that of "Hawaii [and] Southern Italy" – two places which wealthy Anglo-Americans would have considered as vacation destinations rather than places for settlement.[201] Florida's potential was thus more limited than California's in these guidebooks: first and foremost, as a seasonal retreat promising "the most delicate and delightful tropical scenery" for those "overworked and careworn" in the North.[202]

As with Stowe's guidebook, moreover, African Americans appeared as picturesque human emblems of the "tropical" landscape.[203] Observing a Jacksonville square, King

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[199] Edward King, *The Southern States of America* (London: Blackie & Son, 1875), p. 405.

[200] Ibid, p. 382.

[201] Ibid, p. 417.

[202] Ibid, pp. 393, 417.

[203] Ibid, p. 408.

described "the lazy, ne'er-do-well, negro boys" who had the "unconscious pose and careless grace of Neapolitan beggars" and occasionally "among the dusky race…a face beautiful as was ever that of [an] olive-brown maid in Messina" – the author finding some condensed essence of the South in this "lazy" scene which brought together poverty and leisure, race and sensuality. "This is the South, slumberous, voluptuous, round and graceful," he wrote. "Mere existence is pleasure; exertion is a bore."[204] As fixtures in this romanticised South, African Americans were characterised as "unconscious" and "ragged," as banjo-players and deck-hands, while pictures showed distinctly ape-like servants attending to whites – a series of representations which reflected and reinforced Northern acquiescence with Southern assertions that the freedmen were primitive and unthinking.[205] These depictions far outweighed King's solitary admission that "the balance of power in the State is at present held by the blacks, led by a few white men," which was, in any case, soon qualified with the prescient statement that "the Conservative element is rapidly gaining strength, and it is noted as somewhat remarkable that Northerners who settle [in Florida] gradually find themselves leaning to Conservatism," since it offered political "protect[ion]" from "ignorance and vice".[206] As King foretold, Reconstruction's days were numbered and closed with the Democratic victory in the 1876 gubernatorial election. The "Redemption" of home-rule signalled the departure of federal troops from Florida and the imposition of a state government predicated on white supremacy.[207]

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[204] King, *The Southern States*, p. 380.

[205] Ibid, pp. 380-407.

[206] Ibid, p. 419.

[207] Jerrell Shofner, *Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1974).

While hinting at this impending "retreat" from Reconstruction, King's best-selling guidebook spent little time on socio-political unrest as it produced a more compelling vision of Florida's commercial future, including a railroad which would one day run the length of the peninsula and take Americans to within hours of Cuba. Anxieties over the suitability of the environment for white settlers were mediated by expectations that the state would be harnessed eventually, one way or another, given the rare healthful and productive benefits it promised. "The fitness of Florida for the growth of tropical and semi-tropical fruits is astonishing," King wrote, anticipating what would become a dominant theme in the state's promotion. If winter tourism was more prominent in the guidebook, agriculture, too, made an appearance. To be sure, King wrote, "the labour question in Florida, as elsewhere in the Southern States, is perplexing and startling," and he questioned the ability of "Northern and Western" settlers to adapt to the southern reaches of "the vast sub-tropical peninsula". Migrants "native to the South," he felt, would probably have to work the future sugar plantations of South Florida. Whether these "natives" would be black or white he did not clarify, although Stowe had already made clear who were considered "the natural labourers of the South." Here, after all, was an American state fundamentally different from the rest due to its tropical qualities. But this was a distinctiveness which would become crucial to its promotion and growth, as King himself recognised. "We have within our boundaries a tropic land, rich and strange, which will one day be inhabited by thousands of fruit-growers, and where beautiful towns, and perhaps cities, will yet spring up."[208]

[208] King, *The Southern States*, p. 404.

Conclusion

In the decade after the Civil War, guidebooks to California and Florida engaged with long-held, disdainful notions of the states as remote and constructed new positive images of them as America's own "tropical" lands. Following technological and political developments which decreased the states' remoteness, influential writers-cum-boosters such as Charles Nordhoff, in California, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, in Florida, described fertile locales which – despite, or because of, their "exotic" pasts, climates, landscapes, and inhabitants – represented attractive expanses for incoming whites. These early formulations of Semi-Tropical America stressed the exotic traits of lands which nonetheless belonged to America.

California possessed myriad advantages in this pairing, perhaps alluded to in Nordhoff's declaration that the state "was the *first* tropical land which our race has thoroughly mastered". He would surely have accepted that Florida was equally as "tropical" as California – if not more so – but not that Anglo-Americans had "thoroughly mastered" it. At the time of writing, Florida was struggling to overcome the physical and psychological damage which slavery and war had perpetrated. California's promoters faced other historical hindrances, including notions of a violent mining frontier and a growing, heathen Chinese population. By focusing on Southern California, guidebook writers like Nordhoff and Truman shifted attention to the state's undeveloped "tropical" potentialities. Their efforts helped to re-invent California, setting the tone for new visions of the state as America's finest semi-tropical land. As William Henry Bishop wrote of California in 1882,

"A very large part of the State outside of the mining and lumbering districts displays some of those tropical characteristics in which its charm to the Eastern imagination consists."[209]

Similar claims regarding "tropical characteristics" were made by guidebook writers in post-war Florida. But the Southern state's appeal was circumscribed in comparison with California's, geared towards invalids and winter visitors far more than industrious settlers. Florida's associations with slavery, Indian wars, and malarial swamps added more troubling elements to the mix, fuelling Northern concerns about its liveability. Even Harriet Beecher Stowe, who liked Florida enough to live there half the year, found it difficult to foresee white settlers carving independent lives from its "tropical" environment. African Americans thus assumed a vital position in her vision of state development. At a time when blacks voted and took part in Florida's Reconstruction governments, however, African Americans were represented by Stowe as manual workers who possessed wells of "animal content" but showed little sign of the intellectual and enterprising capabilities demanded by republican citizenship and free labour. In the waning years of Reconstruction, Stowe, and Edward King, articulated a colonialist vision of tropical expansion in which affluent Northerners came to and developed Florida, employing African Americans who lacked the innate capabilities to thrive as truly independent citizens. Tellingly Stowe saw benefits in the "Redemption" which would produce greater Northern investment in Florida. In 1877, when the *New York Tribune* reported the murders of African Americans in northern Florida, she defended the state's white population as a "remarkably quiet, peaceable, and honest set of people".[210]

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[209] William Henry Bishop, "Southern California I", *Harpers*, Vol. 65, No. 389 (October 1882), p. 713.

[210] Harriet Beecher Stowe quoted in Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed*, p. 29.

Although different in important ways, California and Florida were both represented in largely – if never exclusively – positive terms as "our" tropical lands by guidebook writers in the early 1870s. These approaches reflected American desires for a potential alternative to the industrialising society of the North and Midwest – an ideal which would characterise the promotion of California and Florida for decades. In "tropical," however, they invoked a term which disturbed Anglo-Americans through its racial and social implications. California and Florida promoters often shared in these anxieties about the tropics. Thus, in the following decades, they crafted the concept of "semi-tropical" lands, which more clearly distinguished the American states from foreign tropics. Agricultural boosters focused on opportunities for republican independence and agrarian prosperity in semi-tropical lands, thus narrating "American" rather than "tropical" forms of society and progress. As the next chapter shows, meanwhile, boosters also strived to attract tourists in search of health and leisure, and disseminated visions of restorative climates, exotic landscapes, and "primitive" racial others. The idea of California and Florida as semi-tropical "escapes" from American modernity attracted wealthy Anglo visitors and converted into pleasure experiences evolving aspects of racial hierarchy in the two states.

Chapter 2

A Climate for Health and Wealth:

The Lure of Tropical Leisure on American Soil

Representations of California and Florida as "semi-tropical" lands infused the selling of those states to health-seekers and pleasure tourists in the late nineteenth century. Railroad and hotel companies, periodicals, travel writers, and tour agencies, deployed visions of recuperative leisure for affluent white Americans, which evinced fascination with the so-called "primitivism" of these environments, reflecting Anglo beliefs that tropical and semi-tropical regions existed at simpler, or "earlier", stages of social development when compared to "modern," urban-industrial societies like the American North.[211] In their semi-tropical states, however, promoters asserted, white tourists could reap the benefits of healthful contact with pre-modern nature and cultures without abandoning the comforts of American modernity. "It was a novel sensation to sit under your own flag, inside your own nation, and drink lemonade made from fruit grown on the place, eat bananas and oranges and figs…all from the same patch," wrote a New Yorker in Southern California in 1880.[212] The sensation was "novel" for him but replicated in countless opinions on Florida, which also afforded pleasures akin to travelling abroad but within the sphere of progressive civilisation. A Chicago-based Florida land company declared in an 1885 pamphlet, "The 'Golden Peninsula's popularity as the foremost health resort is ever increasing, and in no

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[211] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: the United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), pp. 50-56.

[212] Bishop Haven, "The American Damascus", *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1880), p. 11 [BL].

portion of the great Republic are there to be found phases of development and progress more wonderful and interesting than those that are growing in this semi-tropical clime."[213]

This chapter traces the selling of California and Florida to tourists as leisure-filled escapes from an "over-civilised" America, especially the North, where rapid industrialisation and urbanisation was understood to be damaging the well-being of its citizens. Within a decade of Appomattox, the nation's industrial production stood 75% higher than it had in 1865, while the urban population swelled from 15.3% in 1850 to 28.2% in 1880 to nearly 40% by 1900.[214] Celebrated as industrial progress by many commentators, these developments also wrought widespread anxieties about individual healthfulness and social progress.[215] According to T. J. Jackson Lears, visions of themselves as an "enfeebled" urban populace tormented upper- and middle- class whites, who produced a litany of "complaints that [they] were rotting from within at the precise moment they were threatened from without by working-class unrest".[216] Among the dismayed responses of urbanites to industrial strife was a subtler fear, internal rather than external: that modern civilisation had infected them with an array of physical and psychological maladies – including a kind of chronic "nervousness" – which was

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[213] *Florida, the Land of Sunshine, Oranges, and Health* (Chicago: Belmore Florida Land Company, 1885), p. 1 [UF].

[214] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New Yorker: Harper & Row, 1988), p. 461. Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 47.

[215] Robert Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967), p. 12.

[216] T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), p. xii.

weakening the country's educated classes.[217] Women were considered especially susceptible to the neurasthenia epidemic; taken to extremes, this portended the "suicide" of the Anglo race, particularly with the influx of supposedly "un-assimilating" immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe. The emergence of the eugenics movement and new immigration restriction groups in America testified to growing concerns over racial declension. In an 1893 work Reverend Josiah Strong thus proclaimed "the importance to mankind and to the coming kingdom of guarding against the deterioration of the Anglo-Saxon stock in the United States by immigration."[218]

If immigration was one threat, Anglo-American "stock" was also perceived to be at risk from a nervous condition known as neurasthenia. Associated with a bewildering array of symptoms, the disease was given pseudo-scientific treatment in George M. Beard's treatise, *American Nervousness* (1881). Beard's tract attributed the spreading of "nervous exhaustion" to industrial society, arguing that when modern "civilisation…invades any nation, it must carry nervousness and nervous diseases with it".[219] Although the invasion affected only "a fraction of American society," this minority – "brain-workers" – were vital to social progress, thereby enabling Beard to formulate an elitist jeremiad: "All our civilisation hangs by a thread; the activity and force of the very few make us what we are as a nation; and if, through degeneracy, the descendants of the few revert to the condition of

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[217] George M. Beard, *American Nervousness – Its Causes and Consequences* (New York: Putnam & Sons, 1881).

[218] Josiah Strong, *The New Era; or, the Coming Kingdom* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1893), p. 79.

[219] Beard, *American Nervousness*, quoted in Henry Nash Smith (ed.), *Popular Culture and Industrialism, 1865-1890* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), pp. 57-58.

their not very remote ancestors, all our haughty civilisation would be wiped away."[220] Such warnings had deep roots in republican ideology surrounding the eventual decay of civilisations and republics (most famously, Rome) under their own over-developed "luxury".[221] But Beard's tract was also a product of the post-war industrial growth and resonated with middle-class Americans familiar with Herbert Spencer's works on social evolution, in which organisms were improved or diminished by use or disuse and environmental inheritances shaped human development. America, in this estimation, had perhaps gone too far in its relentless "progress" and now exhibited distressing signs of ageing and a potential regression to "degeneracy".[222]

Affluent white Northerners and Midwesterners searched for healthful remedies to the stultifying effects of urban, industrial society. Amid the litany of responses put forth health and pleasure tourism emerged as phenomena with important connotations. Winter tourism was nothing new: for decades, wealthy Americans had travelled to Southern European and Caribbean resorts. After the Civil War, however, expanded railroad coverage and a demographic increase of an American "leisure class" saw a dramatic growth in internal tourism.[223] Desires for improved bodily health ran in tandem with – and were often inextricable from – longings for a less-civilised environment than the urban North. Race

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[220] Beard quoted in Smith, *Popular Culture*, p. 58.

[221] See the introduction in Lears, *No Place of Grace*.

[222] For other influential articulations of such fears, see John L. Thomas, *Alternative America: Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Henry Demarest Lloyd and the Adversary Tradition* (New York: Belknap, 1983).

[223] Cindy Aron, *Working At Play: A History of Vacations in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For nineteenth-century tourism to the Far West, see Anne Hyde, *An American Vision: Far Western Landscape and National Culture, 1820-1920* (New York: New York University Press, 1990).

was a critical identifier of such an environment. Racial primitivism, including the cult of the "noble savage," pervaded the cultural forms of affluent whites, who at once denigrated and envied "savage" races.[224] As Beard wrote, civilised societies offered "an unprecedented freedom and opportunity for the expression of the intellect," but also lamentably repressed emotion and self-expression, fostering "nervous diseases". By contrast, "the savage and the child laugh or cry when they feel like it."[225] Anglo-Americans associated primitive freedom with ethnic and racial minorities who supposedly lived outside the materialism, urbanity and frantic pace of modern life. As Lears writes, among the numerous "remedies for nervousness" which proliferated in the 1880s, "many advisors simply exhorted Americans to cultivate relaxation and repose, to learn from 'Oriental people, the inhabitants of the tropics, and the coloured peoples generally'."[226]

Given the accepted beliefs in the interconnectedness of race and environment, the tropics were a logical destination for Anglo fantasies of renewing leisure. The tropics appeared an antipode to modern "white" America. This, of course, inspired consistent denigration of tropical societies. As a Southern magazine writer noted in 1866, Anglo-Americans accepted "that tropical and semi-tropical populations are often idle, sensual, effete and miserable".[227] Yet the exotic "idleness" of the tropics also explained their appeal as an alternative to over-civilised modernity. Ironically, to be "over-civilised" was, in a sense, to experience the same problems as persons from tropical locales: idleness,

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[224] S. Elizabeth Bird (ed.), *Dressing in Feathers: The Construction of the Indian in American Popular Culture* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).

[225] Beard quoted in Smith, *Popular Culture*, p. 67.

[226] Lears, *No Place of Grace*, p. 52.

[227] "The Influence of Climate", *The Old Guard*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (March 1866), p. 163.

effeminacy, degeneracy. Both were perceived as extremes; polar opposites that ironically produced a similar effect on the individual, who became "miserable" because of their environment. Semi-tropical climates within America's borders, however, represented a median between the two extremes.

Tourism boosters of California and Florida thus sold winter experiences of semi-tropical nature and leisure as a transformative force for "nervous" Anglo-Americans. Climate, and its benign effects on tourists, was the most feted attraction. The mild "winterless" climates of Southern California and peninsular Florida, mirroring the stable seasons of the tropics, were integral to the promotional imagery. As one West Coast promoter explained, "Semi-Tropical California" constituted those counties whose "climate – or, more properly speaking, climates – are milder and show less variation between winter and summer."[228] Boosters tapped into contemporary medical theory advising sufferers of nervousness or consumption to travel to such climes for the winter.[229] One health guide to Florida commented that "a large number of persons in the United States are suffering from diseases, the majority of which may be greatly relieved by a change of climate."[230] Numerous texts on climate and health contrasted the curative effects of California or

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[228] I. N. Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World: Room for Millions of Immigrants* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1883), p. 18 [BL].

[229] John E. Baur, *The Health Seekers of Southern California, 1870-1900* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1959). "A Winter Cure", *Semi-Tropical*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (November 1875), p. 141 [UF].

[230] *Bethesda – A Traveller's Criticism on our Health Resorts, their Scenery, Climatic Peculiarities, and Curative Influence* (Boston: Billings, Clapp & Co., 1885) [UF].

Florida against the damaging coldness of the North.[231] An 1889 Florida guidebook included a table of "Deaths from Consumption" (reproduced from census data) which cast the peninsular state as a haven for sufferers of the disease.[232] If the medical benefits of a change of climate were exaggerated, if not illusory, the promotion nevertheless persuaded "invalids" to make trips southward or westward. Their arrivals in turn impelled hotel construction and land investment in California and Florida, opening the way for a broader tourism pursued by "pleasure-seekers".

The leisure imagery of the two states was not identical, however. Southern California was promoted through a "Spanish Fantasy Past," as boosters romanticised the pre-American period into a *fiesta* of easy living and Latin contentment.[233] In 1890 the booster-journalist Charles H. Shinn thus reported an Anglo fascination with the "land of the Padre, the Indian neophyte, the leather-clad Spanish soldier, and the jovial old Spanish ranchero," as incoming tourists imagined "the true lotus land where no one ever had a care,

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[231] See Lewis Rogers, *Climate in Pulmonary Consumption: and, California as a Health Resort* (Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1874). Abram Marvin Shaw, *California as a Health Resort* (Boston: J. S. Adams, 1885). Frederick D. Lente, *The Constituents of Climate, with Special Reference to the Climate of Florida* (Louisville: Richmond & Louisville Medical Journal Book and Steam Job Print, 1878). Charles J. Kenworthy, *Climatology of Florida* (Savannah: Morning New Steam Printing House, 1880) [Both UF].

[232] Table in James Wood Davidson, *The Florida of To-Day: A Guide for Tourists and Settlers* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1889), p. 109 [UCF].

[233] Phoebe Kropp, "'All Our Yesterdays': The Spanish Fantasy Past and the Politics of Public Memory in Southern California, 1884-1939" (Unpublished PhD. Diss., San Diego: University of California, San Diego, 1999).

and where it seemed as if 'it were always afternoon'."[234] Possessing a more traumatic history of slavery and Civil War, Florida was sold to tourists through its verdant wilderness, including river and hunting excursions, which promised its own release from modern stresses. Daniel Tyler, a New Yorker who travelled to Florida for health reasons, wrote in his 1881 guide, "When a man is far removed from the contentions of a busy life, and his mind is left open to the healthful influences of nature, he is apt to pause awhile, and to reflect upon" his life, finding solace and strength.[235] The tropical-racial emphases in the two states also differed, with Spanish peoples featured in California and African Americans in Florida. Yet booster depicted these ethnic and racial others in similar ways, as "picturesque" natives for the curious gaze of white tourists. Furthermore, both Southern California and Florida were envisaged as sites of gendered rejuvenation, where Anglo women could become healthier and more fertile and "sportsmen," released from effete modernity, could reclaim their masculinity. Thus the semi-tropical states were sold as healthful destinations for "over-civilised" Americans which still upheld "civilised" notions of race and gender and supported white-male ascendancy.

Throughout, the tourist-oriented boosterism, as compared with settler promotion, was geared towards an affluent and exclusive fraction of American society who could afford winter travel.[236] In the Gilded Age, vacationing anywhere – but especially to places as distant from most Americans as Southern California or Florida – was financially

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[234] Charles H. Shinn, "With the Spanish Californians", *Interior* (November 6, 1890), np. [Charles H. Shinn Papers, BL].

[235] Daniel G. Tyler, *Where To Go In Florida* (New York: W. M. Clarke, 1881), p. 26 [UCF].

[236] See Chapter 3, "The Fruits of Labour: Booster Visions of Republican Renewal and Semi-Tropical Agriculture".

prohibitive, requiring free time as well as funds for transportation, accommodation, and activities. Travel itself was expensive: at a time when middle-class professions like lawyers and doctors earned approximately $1,200 per year and the average city clerk less than $1,000, a first-class railroad ticket from New York to California in 1883 cost $115, with a third-class ticket half that.[237] Tickets to Florida were less, $31 from New York (by ocean steamer or rail) and $22 from Cincinnati, but sufficiently high for state immigration promoters to organise a convention at Jacksonville in 1887 calling for "a concession of rates so as to enable people to come to this State" who were not wealthy tourists.[238] The exclusivity did not diminish the significance of the promotional imagery aimed at winter visitors, however. These booster texts conceptualised new identities for California and Florida specifically as seasonal retreats. Although, as one Florida survey acknowledged, "There is no positive way to assemble all facts regarding the arrival and departure of tourists," the tourism literature fed into American experiences of these states.[239] The promotional imagery thus illustrated the attitudes of Anglo elites who shaped local development, as tourism grew into a major industry in California and Florida.

Promoters recognised a range of incentives to attracting tourists in addition to filling trains and hotels. Tourists brought wealth, raised publicity, and also returned as settlers. A Los Angeles journalist noted in 1891, "This wealthy tourist travel is worth catering to, not

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[237] Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World*, p. 55. For wages, see Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing at Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1919* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), pp. xix-xxvi.

[238] "Floridiana – Immigration Meeting: Noteworthy Gathering of Representative Men From Over the State", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7, No. 32 (August 8, 1887), p. 666 [UF].

[239] Nathan Mayo, *Florida, an Advancing State: An Industrial Survey* (Tallahassee: Florida State Legislature, 1928), p. 164 [FSU].

alone for the money which it brings into a place, but also for its indirect benefits. Many of the people who thus come for a short stay, if pleased with a section, make up their minds to remain, or induce their friends to do so," while "others may be led to invest capital and all of them, who are pleased, are good walking advertisements of the place."[240] This was a double-edged sword, of course. Disappointed visitors occasionally denigrated California and Florida, whether because of bad weather, financial annoyances, or other reasons. In a letter home New Yorker Margaret Etheridge Maynard complained of her winter visit to St. Augustine, Florida, "I expected to revel in delicious figs, dates, bananas, Japan plums…and all the other things those romancers that write the Florida circulars pretend you are going to have in a 'semi-tropical climate'," but instead she encountered rain, poor fruit, and pervasive real estate speculation.[241] "Land sharks," as well as legitimate dealers, targeted affluent and gullible visitors. As an 1886 California guidebook acknowledged, "There are land-swindles in California, as there are in Florida."[242] Yet, suitably warned, those visitors who benefited from their experience outweighed the naysayers and supported the publicity effort. Doctor A. A. Ward, an Ohioan who came to San Diego County in the 1880s, thus wrote to the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, "It has benefited my wife's health…I believe if anyone in the first or congestive stage of consumption would come here they

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[240] "California and Florida", *Los Angeles Times* (May 19, 1891), p. 4.

[241] Letter by Margaret Etheridge Maynard reproduced in Octave Thanet, "Six Visions of St. Augustine", *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 58, No. 346 (August 1886), p. 187.

[242] Theodore Van Dyke, *Southern California* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1886), p. 221.

would get well, or at least…make no further progress for the worse."[243] Invalids and tourists often returned to become residents. An 1899 pamphlet by the Santa Fe Railroad noted of Southern California, "In this way the country has been built up, health and pleasure seekers of one year becoming the settlers of the next."[244]

Through the promotion of health and pleasure tourism, meanwhile, the development of California and Florida soothed national concerns about the experience of leisure. As Cindy Aron has written, in Gilded Age America leisure was both desired – as a counterbalance to what many perceived to be an excessively busy, materialistic society – and feared, since it ran counter to traditional values of thrift and industry demanded by both Protestantism and republicanism.[245] Boosters of Southern California and Florida, however, emphasised the positive consequences of leisure as a healthful and civilised pursuit in their new societies. Thus they contributed to a shift from producer to consumerist conceptions of American citizenship. Selling California and Florida as "semi-tropical," they located pleasure and enjoyment as remedies to the destructive qualities of modern life, while making these qualities integral to the "modern" civilisations emerging in the states. The 1885 *Florida Annual* declared, "Thousands of souls are yet to find in South Florida the one place in North America where they can realise their ideal of a semi-tropical home, where a life of easy comfort can be enjoyed under laws and political institutions adapted to

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[243] Undated Letter in 1888 from Dr. A. A. Ward (Del Mar, San Diego County) to Mr. Holabird (Southern California Horticultural Society) ["San Diego Chamber of Commerce – Correspondence, 1888-1890", Charles Turrill Papers, CHS].

[244] *Southern California* (Los Angeles: Santa Fe Railroad Passenger Department, 1899), p. 9 [CSL].

[245] Aron, *Working At Play*, pp. 3-10.

American genius."[246] For affluent Americans, the semi-tropical states promised "a life of easy comfort" without losing any of the civilised traits, "laws," or "political institutions," which distinguished "American genius" from tropical societies. Tourism promoters of California and Florida thus affixed semi-tropical leisure to Anglo-American ideals of social progress and capitalist development. As an unnamed travel writer espoused in an 1885 *Los Angeles Times* piece on the two states, appropriately entitled "In the Semi-Tropics":

> Despite sundry disadvantages…Florida will yet be one of the twin garden spots of the New World, and excepting the El Dorado of the Pacific, the brightest, sunniest clime in all this broad land – a veritable paradise to the tourist and the invalid, where health will come on healing wings, and wealth will follow in its train. Then all hail! to the two great sanitariums of the globe – Florida and California![247]

Semi-tropical California for Health and Pleasure

The promotion of semi-tropical California to tourists incorporated two major strands: an obsession with the healthfulness of the climate, "for imparting vim and energy to a tired and fatigued system," and a romanticised pre-American mythology.[248] As Kevin Starr writes, "Two key symbols of identification for [the] emerging region were the sun and the

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[246] C. K. Munroe (ed.), *The Florida Annual – Impartial and Unsectional, 1885* (New York, 1885), p. 45 [UF].

[247] Itinerant, "In the Semi-Tropics", *Los Angeles Times* (March 29, 1885), p. 4.

[248] "The Effect Climate Has Upon Easterners", *Los Angeles Times* (June 24, 1886), np [CSL Scrapbooks].

Spanish past."[249] Each articulated narratives of Anglo expansion into an exotic setting which served as a therapeutic alternative to the rapidly-industrialising East. Although an American state since 1850, California, and especially its southern counties, appeared decidedly foreign for most visitors; a land which, as one visitor observed in 1888, featured "the sun, the genial air, and the fruits, flowers, and semitropical suggestions of a perpetual summer."[250] The California Excursion Association reported how "by many travellers this country is likened unto Palestine," while references to Italy, Spain and Mexico were also commonplace.[251] Tourism boosters encouraged "orientalised" visions of Southern California as somewhere evolving from a romantic Latin backwater to a progressive Anglo-American civilisation. The ongoing displacement of Spanish-Mexican culture and peoples was translated by boosters into a "picturesque" tourist experience, even as the region's rapid development meshed awkwardly with longings for a pre-modern escape. A perverse fascination with what was being displaced thus fuelled tourist growth, as boosters displayed what Renato Rosaldo has termed "imperialist nostalgia": the desire to possess what one is destroying.[252]

Railroad construction enabled the tourism phenomenon as it brought Southern California within the reach of affluent Easterners. Seven years after the transnational

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[249] Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 83.

[250] Charles Dudley Warner, "The Golden Hesperides", *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 61, No. 363 (January 1888), p. 56.

[251] Warner Bros. [Managers, California Excursion Association], *Southern California – A Semi-Tropic Paradise* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Co., 1887), p. 146 [CHS].

[252] Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia", *Representations*, Vol. 26 (1989), pp. 107-22.

railroad was finished in 1869, the Southern Pacific Railroad completed a line from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Direct tracks between Southern California and the East were then constructed – in 1881, the Southern Pacific connected with the Texas and Pacific at El Paso; a new, independent Southern Pacific line to New Orleans was finished two years later; and in 1885 the Santa Fe Railroad was completed, breaking the Southern Pacific's monopoly, reducing fares, and contributing to a brief real estate "boom" in Los Angeles County. From not a single mile of railroad in 1870, Southern California boasted over 2,000 miles by 1890.[253] As an American railroad agent wrote in 1896, the railroads "have shortened the distance to Southern California thousands of miles and made it possible for tourists and investors to visit your semi-tropic land with every chance of their becoming converts to your health-giving sunshine and beautiful surroundings."[254] Moreover, after the railroad-sponsored guidebooks to "tropical" California produced in the early 1870s, the railroads published pamphlets, funded magazines, and formed passenger departments which hailed the health and pleasure benefits of "semi-tropical" California. L. H. Nutting of the Southern Pacific informed tourists that the state was "originally part of Mexico [and] has inherited [Mexico's] good name for healthfulness of climate" – a region where "hues of the ocean and sky rival the tropics, and the profusion of vegetable life and loveliness also

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[253] *New Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1891), p. 19 [CSL].

[254] A. Thorne [American Representative, London, Chatham & Dover Railway], "Railroads and Sunshine", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (February 1896), p. 153. [Hereafter cited as *LS*]

suggest a far-southern clime" – but reassured readers that, unlike in foreign tropics, "every man lives under his own vine and fig-tree, and breathes the free air of America."[255]

The geographical boundaries of the semi-tropical, Southern, part of California were not fixed. For William Henry Bishop, in 1882, Southern California was everywhere south of San Francisco; for other promoters, then and later, it usually referred to the counties south of Tehachapi Pass.[256] In either case, intra-state contrasts emerged within the tourism literature of Northern and Southern California. The latter, for example, did not include the Yosemite Valley, which became a famous destination for tourists, representative of the rugged West of spectacular views and a hunter's wilderness.[257] In Southern California, by contrast, climate and its health effects were paramount. "So unlike are the California of the North and the California of the South that already two distinct people are growing up," claimed Los Angeles-based promoter Joseph P. Widney in an 1888 pamphlet in which "climatology" was the main theme.[258] Defining Southern California "from the northern part of Santa Barbara County to the Mexican line" (about thirty percent of the state), a pamphlet

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[255] L. H. Nutting [Eastern Passenger Agent, Southern Pacific Company], *To the Pacific Coast via the Sunset Route of the Southern Pacific Company, from New Orleans to Los Angeles and San Francisco* (New York: New York General Agency, 1885), p. 14 [BL].

[256] William Henry Bishop, "Southern California III", *Harpers*, Vol. 66, No. 391 (December 1882), p. 713

[257] A typical article explained that Yosemite Valley promised "the delights of a week's or a month's [worth of] shooting among our hills and forests": "Sportsmen's Targets", *Sunset*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (August 1898), p. 53.

[258] Walter Lindley & J. P. Widney, *California of the South – Its Physical Geography, Climate, Resources, Routes of Travel, and Health-Resorts, Being a Complete Guide-Book to Southern California* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1888), p. 62 [CSL].

by the Southern California Bureau of Information declared, "The climate of California is good; that of Southern California is better."[259]

The curative attributes of this climate were discussed pervasively. A magazine in 1880 cited a Cincinnati grain merchant spending the winter in Southern California for health reasons as being "much improved" – adding that "he has spent the past four years in Florida" (apparently with no such recuperation).[260] Collectively such cases constituted a "health rush" of "pulmonary exiles" from the East to Southern California.[261] Coastal hotels were built to cater for the more affluent, including the Arlington in Santa Barbara (1876), the Southern Pacific-owned Del Monte in Monterrey (1880), and, south of San Diego, the Coronado (1889), the biggest and one of the most luxurious hotels of the time. By 1900 more than 100 tourist hotels were operating in Southern California, factors in the region's emergence from the shadow of Northern California into a place where sun-kissed leisure defined the landscape.[262]

The semi-tropical climate was sold as a remedy for psychological as well as physical maladies associated with the frigid urban-industrial Northeast. In an 1883 magazine article (which would not be her last or greatest contribution to Southern California's self-imagery) Massachusetts-born writer Helen Hunt Jackson articulated how the climate provided for an alternative outlook for over-civilised Americans. "Climate is to a country what temperament is to a man – Fate," Jackson wrote. "The figure is not so

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[259] Harry Ellington Brook, *The Land of Sunshine: Southern California* (Los Angeles: Southern California Bureau of Information, 1893), p. 9 [BrL].

[260] *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (April 1880), p. 5 [BL].

[261] Exile, "Florida and California", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 14 (June 26, 1882), p. 213 [UF].

[262] Starr, *Inventing the Dream*, p. 48.

fanciful as it seems, for temperament, broadly defined…determines the point of view of a man's mental and spiritual vision; in other words, the light in which he sees things."[263] A change of climate, thus, potentially allowed for a different "mental and spiritual vision" – a healthier, freer outlook impossible amid the "modern civilisation" which supposedly fed the "nervousness" of white Americans. For Jackson, Southern California was alluring because its climate suggested the contented freedom of the tropics without disabling those progressive traits belonging to natives of colder climes. She wrote, "The tropics are tropic because the sun shines down too straight: vegetation leaps into luxuriance under the nearly vertical ray; but human activities languish; intellect is supine; only the passions, human nature's rank weed growths, thrive."[264] Typical of Anglo conceptions of tropical backwardness, since there "intellect is supine," this view also accounted for the fascination which the tropics, as places released from the constraints of civilisation, held for many Euro-Americans. The latter inhabited "the temperate zone, [where] the sun strikes the earth too much aslant. Human activities develop; intellect is keen; the balance of passion and reason is normally adjusted; but vegetation is slow and restricted. As compared with the productiveness of the tropics, the best that the temperate zone can do is scanty." Despite possessing superior rational capabilities, Northerners were divorced from a kind of latent productivity which the tropics provided, albeit at the costly expense of "reason".

In certain semi-tropical locales, however, the stark divisions vanished:

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[263] H. H. (Helen Hunt Jackson), "Outdoor Industries in Southern California", *Century*, Vol. 26, No. 6 (October 1883), p. 803. The article was reproduced in an 1892 travel book by the same author: Helen Hunt Jackson, *Glimpses of Three Coasts* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1892), pp. 3-29.

[264] H. H., "Outdoor Industries", p. 803.

> There are a few spots on the globe where the conditions of the country override these laws, and do away with these lines of discrimination in favours. Florida, Italy, the south of France and of Spain, a few islands, and South California, complete the list. These places are doubly dowered. They have the wealths [sic.] of the two zones, without the drawbacks of either.[265]

Like Mediterranean countries but "new" – and, therefore, untainted by Old World problems of over-civilisation and entrenched political corruption – Southern California and Florida offered renewal as middling, semi-tropical regions.

Infused with this logic, semi-tropical references increasingly permeated the selling of Southern California to tourists. Mary Vail, whose pamphlet was intended as an antidote to the more fanciful claims of real estate dealers, stated that "California, and southern California in particular, lies in a semi-tropic clime."[266] An 1888 guide to Santa Barbara promised visitors an enchanting stay by "Semi-Tropic Seas," while a representative collection of "souvenir views" showed a lush park with palm trees as "a typical Southern California semi-tropic scene".[267] Palm trees were not, in fact, native to the region but instead introduced by horticulturists who delighted in the tropical characteristics they provided to urban scenery. Countless souvenir photographs featured palm-lined streets and

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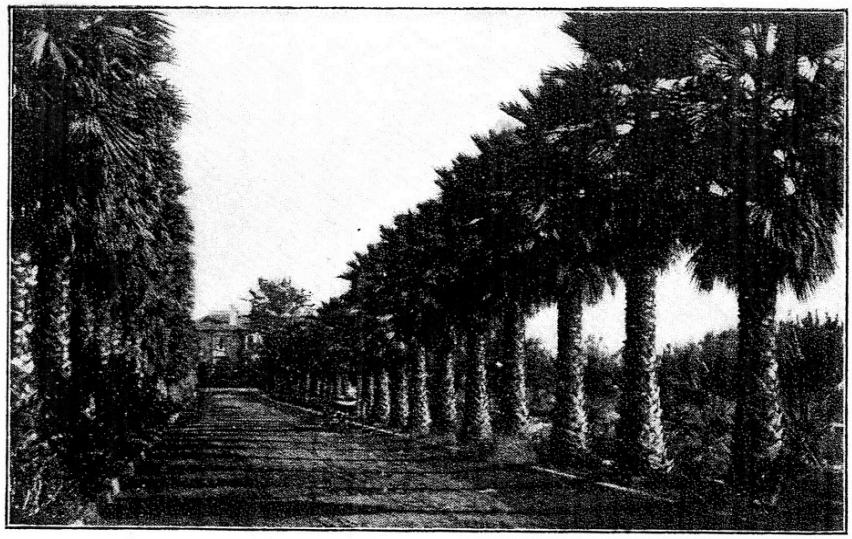
[265] H. H., "Outdoor Industries", p. 803.

[266] Mary Vail, *'Both Sides Told', or Southern California as It Is* (Pasadena: West Coast Publishing Company, 1888), p. 5 [LC].

[267] E. McD. Johnstone, *'By Semi-Tropic Seas': Santa Barbara and Surroundings* (Buffalo: Matthews, Northrup & Co., 1888) [CSL]. *California Souvenir Views: A Collection of 64 Views of California and Arizona* (Los Angeles: B. R. Baumgardt, 1902), np [UCLA].

guides reported the admiration of tourists for the luxuriant vegetation of Southern Californian parks and boulevards:

Fig. 2.1 – *A Palm Drive in Los Angeles* photograph (1902) [UCLA][268]



A palm drive in Los Angeles. Several varieties of the palm are used in Southern California for ornamental purposes. Those shown in the above picture are the fan palm, the most popular variety in this section.

Incoming Americans imbibed this imagery. "The land," a female tourist to Southern California reported in 1893, "is not a tropical one, but a semi-tropical."[269]

The California Excursion Association deployed semi-tropical imagery as a metaphor for California's regenerative qualities for Easterners. Founded and managed by Warner Bros. in the 1880s, the California Excursion Association was a tour operator in Los

[268] Photograph in *California Souvenir Views*, np. *Greater Los Angeles: The Most Progressive Metropolis of the Twentieth Century* (Los Angeles: The Pictorial American, 1907), p. 74 [UCLA].

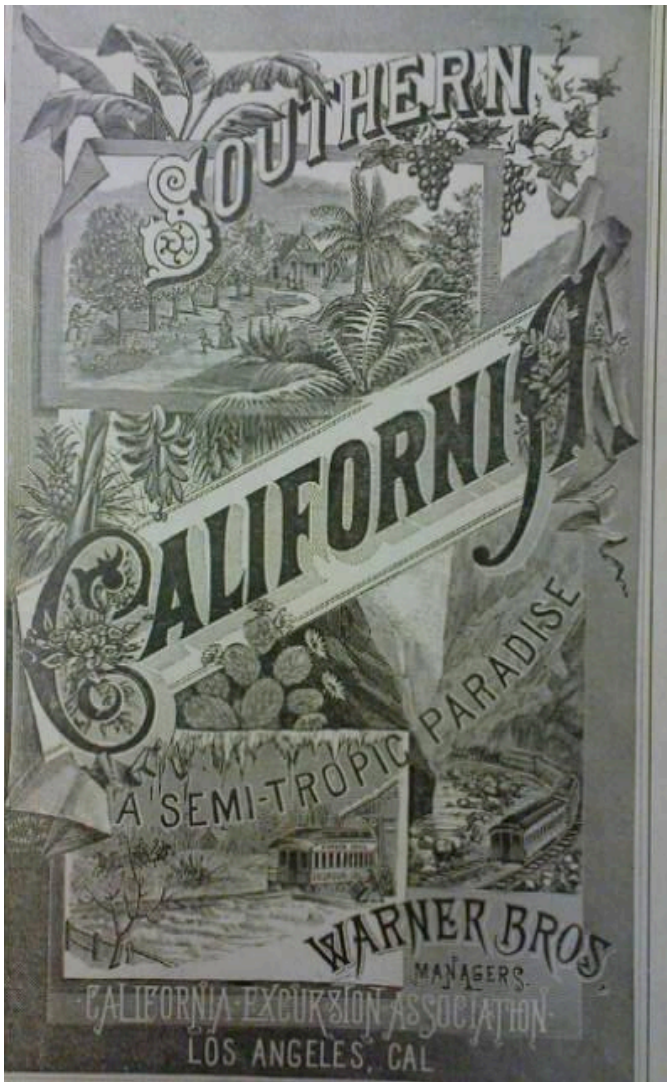
[269] Kate Sanborn, "In Southern California – Kate Sanborn's Experiences and Opinions", *New York Times* (August 7, 1893), np.

Angeles which disseminated detailed pamphlets about Southern California throughout the East and Midwest.[270] The company recognised the role these texts played in attracting tourists: as C. A. Warner explained in a meeting held August 14, 1888 at the San Diego Chamber of Commerce, the covers of their guidebooks were crucial since "a person who picks up such a book is inclined to read it, if the outside catches his eyes…He sees the words, 'Southern California', and wants to know something more about this subject."[271] Significantly, given this rationale, the Association's 1887 guide was titled "Southern California – A Semi-Tropic Paradise":

[270] These Warner Brothers were not connected to the later Polish-born, Jewish émigrés who, in 1918, opened the Warner Bros. film studio in Hollywood.

[271] Statement made by C. A. Warner, of Warner Bros., Los Angeles, at meeting at San Diego Chamber of Commerce (Aug. 14, 1888). ["Records on Advertising Southern California," Charles Turrill Papers, CHS].

Fig. 2.2 – *Southern California: A Semi-Tropic Paradise* Cover (1887) [CHS][272]



The eye-catching cover depicted a landscape bursting with the vegetation of cacti, fruits, and palm trees, traversed by the civilising symbol of the excursion train in the foreground. California's semi-tropical nature, such images asserted, could be enjoyed from the comfort of modern technology. Inside, the pamphlet gave ample reasons for those Easterners who were "stimulate[d]…to overwork, mental and physical," and "suffering from nervous

[272] Cover of pamphlet by Warner Bros., *Southern California – A Semi-Tropic Paradise*.

prostration," to visit the West Coast.[273] Easterners were informed that they were weakened by an excess of "electricity" – a consequence of cold climates and industrial technologies – but that relief could be found by an extended stay in Southern California, a region which was "almost non-electrical". This lack of electricity led some newcomers to think they were becoming "lazy" when in fact they were experiencing the "healing power of nature". Advertisements declared the "wonderful coolness of our almost tropical position," which made for delightful "health resort[s]" such as the Hotel Arcadia in Santa Monica. Elsewhere were highlighted the "resources and commercial prosperity of our Semi-Tropic Land," with wealthy tourists, whether regaining their health or on pleasure tours, encouraged to invest in the booming region.[274]

Indeed, investments in land and houses featured alongside the healthful effects of semi-tropical California in the promotional literature. "Nowhere within the Union can wealth make a home surrounded with beauty and tropical growth so speedily as in Southern California," the *Los Angeles Mirror* stated.[275] Theodore Van Dyke's 1886 guidebook connected tourism to profitable opportunities in rising land prices. Van Dyke was already a renowned promoter, having written two popular treatises on hunting and fishing in California, and his latest work highlighted the climate's influence on health and pleasure as well as its economic worth.[276] "The number of people here who were once invalids, but who now appear as well as any one, is very great," he wrote, before turning his attention to

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[273] Warner Bros., *Southern California*, p. 37.

[274] Ibid, pp. 9, 37, 146.

[275] *Los Angeles Mirror* (January 8, 1887), np [CSL Scrapbooks].

[276] Theodore Van Dyke, *The Still Hunter* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1883); Van Dyke, *The Rifle, Rod, and Gun in California* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1881).

the phenomenon of greater land values. "Their prices may be based upon a false foundation – to wit, climate, scenery, and general comfort. Nevertheless, people pay them."[277] He attributed this largely to Southern California's recent emergence as a leisure destination, which had created a growing "demand [for land]…that the shrewdest and wealthiest businessmen – men familiar with Florida and all the pleasure resorts of America – consider it a certain basis of calculation." Evidence for this could be found in the bold new plans to build a hotel at the cost of over $300,000 on Coronado Beach, which would, in time, "make the rarest watering-place in the world," bordered by the Pacific and "a thousand gardens where tropic fruits will bloom."[278]

As Southern California promoters asserted the healthful benefits of a semi-tropical climate, they also constructed a "Spanish Fantasy Past" which cast the region's history as one of paternalistic friars, romantic *fiestas*, heroic *vaqueros*, crumbling missions, contented Native American workers, and a leisure-filled Latin existence.[279] The Spanish Fantasy Past became a pervasive motif in Southern California – influencing boosterism, art, literature, theatre, architecture, clothing design, and songs – and spawned tourism events like *La Fiesta de Los Angeles* and the Mission Play. The Spanish Fantasy Past reflected a curious, even ironic, shift in the region's self-imagery.[280] Having disdained California's pre-American past in earlier decades, Anglo-Americans in the 1880s and 1890s romanticised the Spanish-Franciscan period. As booster-journalist Charles Shinn remarked in 1890, "There has been a sudden development of interest in the Spanish days of the southwest and

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[277] Van Dyke, *Southern California*, p. 207.

[278] Ibid, p. 215.

[279] Kropp, "'All Our Yesterdays'".

[280] Carey McWilliams, *Southern California Country: An Island of the Land* (New York: Ayer, 1949).

the Pacific coast. Literature begins to recognise the lasting and unique elements of romance in the long-trampled native Californian, whom the *gringo* squatter called a 'greaser', and robbed or shot."[281]

Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel, *Ramona*, catalysed the Spanish Fantasy Past into a promotional theme. The book was originally written to expose the maltreatment of Native Americans – in her own mind, a kind of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* for California's Mission Indians. The plot told of a tragic love affair in Spanish-era California between Ramona and Alessandro, an Indian, who loses his land to, and then is murdered by, white squatters. Ironically, however, the book's greatest effect was to sanitise the brutalities of racial conquest and fuel interest in a "romantic" Spanish California which enticed thousands of Eastern tourists.[282] The book sold 7,000 copies within three months of publication and went on to become a national bestseller.[283] Within a few years, promoters hailed *Ramona* as having first struck "deep into the vein of gold-bearing quartz" that became the Spanish Fantasy Past.[284] Residents absorbed the imagery: Los Angeles' library boasted 100 copies and still had a waiting list for a novel in which, the city librarian explained, the "characters are pure fiction…but the scenes are photographically true".[285] *Ramona* acted as the

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[281] Charles Shinn, "With the Spanish Californians", *Interior* (November 6, 1890), np [Charles H. Shinn Papers, BL].

[282] Kropp, "'All Our Yesterdays'", pp. 19-21.

[283] Valerie Sherer Mathes, *Helen Hunt Jackson and Her Indian Reform Legacy* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), p. 81.

[284] Shinn, "With the Spanish Californians", np.

[285] Charles F. Lummis (ed.), *The Mentor: Southern California, the Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 4, No. 21 (December 15, 1916), p. 10 [CHS].

inspiration for countless pleasure tours of Southern California, as Easterners were drawn by Jackson's descriptions of the "delicious, languid, semi-tropic summer [which] came hovering over the valley" and toured Ramona's "real" home, the ruined missions, and old Spanish neighbourhoods, in search of a "languid" Latin past.[286]

The Spanish Fantasy Past reflected Anglo desires for pre-industrial modes of leisure. Charles Keeler, in an 1899 guidebook published by the Santa Fe Railroad, thus captured the vision of idle pleasure: "They were the days of dark caballeros with gay costumes and jangling spurs…., of tinkling guitars that marked the rhythm for merry dancers, and of free, open-handed hospitality."[287] But such imagery also softened the harsh realities of Anglo displacement of Mexican communities.[288] As Albert Camarillo has written, the tourist boom of the 1870s and 1880s changed the "social milieu" for Mexicans in Southern California, where "the Mexican population fell from majority to minority status."[289] The expanding tourism trade impelled needs for a "service-worker labour force," in the construction and maintenance of hotels and urban improvements, and Spanish-surnamed persons who were squeezed out of better occupations and off the land

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[286] Helen Hunt Jackson, *Ramona: A Story* [1884] (New York: Signet Classic, 1988), pp. 106-7.

[287] Charles A. Keeler, *Southern California* (Los Angeles: Passenger Department, Santa Fe Railroad, 1899), p. 90 [CSL].

[288] McWilliams, *Southern California Country*. David G. Gutierrez, "Significant to Whom?: Mexican Americans and the History of the American West", *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (November 1993), p. 524.

[289] Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 41.

increasingly filled the menial positions.[290] Although ostensibly giving "voice" to California's Latin heritage, the Spanish Fantasy Past removed Mexicans from the modern arena in which they were being disenfranchised.[291]

Boosters converted impoverished ethnic communities into "picturesque", semi-tropical sights for Anglo tourists. Mexican communities became part and parcel of Anglo tourist itineraries. Describing the Los Angeles barrio of "Spanish Town," for example, a magazine writer bid the reader: "Come, let us go through Sonora".[292] He observed that "in Sonora the recollection of Mexico is revived, but of a very shabby and provincial Mexico": *mescal* and *tequila* were easily available (reflecting the locals' amoral tendencies) and the quarter had the scenic "vestiges of an arcade system of the kind known in some form to travellers in most tropical or semi-tropical countries". American tourists could wander the Mexican quarter as they might a Latin American country but always safe in the knowledge that this was American soil and the natives were historic remnants of a conquered society, and also an unthreatening and subservient class: "This is a people which has gone to the wall…They are for the most part engaged in the coarser kind of work; they are improvident, and apparently contented with their lot." Mexican poverty was thus mediated through the prism of historic Latin "contentment," which also affirmed the interlinked hierarchies of race and class in modern California, where "only here and there…a Spanish name…rises into prominence in the state of which they were once owners."[293] (A similar

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[290] Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, pp. 41-52.

[291] William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and The Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), p. 28.

[292] Bishop, "Southern California III", p. 47.

[293] Ibid, p. 47.

ambivalence characterised promotional descriptions of the state's Chinese, which encouraged tourists to visit Chinatown but only with a sense of moral disgust at what was encountered. "Every tourist should visit Chinatown twice – once in the daytime and once at night," J. P. Widney wrote, adding that "the Chinaman…is dishonest, generally insolent, and, after making…the family dinner, spends his nights gambling in the dirty hovels of Chinatown".[294] Nevertheless, as an 1896 booster magazine noted, "'Chinatown' is the Mecca of tourists.")[295]

Tourism boosters described spatial and temporal journeys into Spanish California through which the stresses of industrial America could be escaped. Guides reported the "picturesque scenes of Mission, Mexican and Indian life…with their manners and customs utterly foreign to anything else found in the United States."[296] Of the missions, a travel book explained, "To see Capistrano, or San Luis Rey, or Santa Ines, is almost like visiting a foreign land…totally unlike what one is accustomed to in others parts of our land,…oriental in character."[297] Departing into pre-modern surroundings, Anglo tourists could thus experience an environment typified by Latin leisure and pleasure rather than American graft and work. To be sure, this did not extend to positive appraisals of Mexicans. "It is easy to understand the character, or, to speak more accurately, the lack of

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[294] Widney, *California of the South*, pp. 101-2.

[295] J. Torrey Connor, "Only John", *LS*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (February 1896), p. 111.

[296] Charles F. Carter, *The Missions of Nueva California: An Historical Sketch* (San Francisco: The Whitaker & Ray Co., 1900), p. 1 [UCLA].

[297] Charles F. Carter, *Some By-Ways of California* (San Francisco: Whitaker & Ray Co., 1902), p. 187 [UCLA].

character, of the old Mexican and Spanish Californians," Jackson wrote.[298] According to promoters, Mexicans in California had lived unproductively and displayed a child-like indulgence in simple pleasures, "with no thought or purpose for a future more defined than 'Some other time; not to-day'". This explained (and justified) why the "restless" and "insatiable…Yankee[s]" were California's "conquerors"; part of the "inexorable logic" that saw "the country steadily [fulfilling]" its "destiny". But this also explained the Spanish appeal for Americans weary over the debilitating effects of industrial progress. As Jackson's language implied, the colonialist narrative of conquest mixed nostalgia with envy at how these "old" Californians had lived. There was "a charm" in Spanish California: "Simply out of sunshine, [the Californios] had distilled…an Orientalism as fine in its way as that made in the East by generations of prophets, crusaders and poets." Anglo-Americans hoped to imbibe this exotic charm. Jackson queried whether "as the generations move on, the atmosphere of life in the sunny empire they lost will not revert more and more to their type," until a "toning down" of the "tireless Yankee beat" meant that "money and work will not be the highest values" in Southern California.[299]

Paradoxically, tourism promoters applied these fantasies towards regional economic growth. As Charles Fletcher Lummis wrote in 1895, "Of those who come merely to *see* California, a vast proportion are attracted by our Romance," such that "the Missions are, next to our climate and its consequences, the best capital Southern California has."[300] A profound contradiction thus ran through the tourist imagery. In the jargon of the period (and since), "civilisation" has been "at its core…an economic concept," broadly meaning a

[298] H. H., "Outdoor Industries", p. 820.

[299] Ibid, pp. 807, 820.

[300] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (December 1895), p. 43.

commercially-driven, productive society.[301] Promoters invariably shared in this view of capitalist growth as progressive. The concept of over-civilisation, however, included profound fears that post-war America had become excessively materialistic and lost touch with nature and joys more basic than money-making. The popularity of the Spanish Fantasy Past reflected, in part, its suggestion of a happier existence unspoilt by capitalist ambition. Booster Harry Ellington Brook wrote, the Californios' was "an easy-going and picturesque existence [in which] money…was scarcely needed" or valued.[302] The arrival of Anglo-Americans had ended this "easy-going order of things" – which, the writer stressed, was "of course a change for the better. It was the coming of what we call 'civilisation'."[303] Yet boosters suggested a potential curtailing of Anglo-American excesses in semi-tropical California. J. P. Widney's 1888 guidebook cast the region as the meeting point of "the two bloods [who] share the Western Continent," the "old Campo Santo" and the "Anglo-Teuton," and paid "at least a slight tribute to the kindly spirit of that type of civilisation which is now rapidly passing away," since "[Spanish California] had in it nothing of the rush and the drive, the restless energy which have come with the type which has supplanted it." [304] Half-articulated in such passages was awareness that in selling Southern California Anglo-Americans were diluting the proclaimed appeal of a semi-tropical retreat from industrial development.

Such contradictions notwithstanding, promoters hailed the tourist pleasures of a pre-capitalist Spanish California while building and selling hotels and towns across the region.

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[301] Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, pp. 50-51.

[302] Harry Ellington Brook, "Olden Times in Southern California", *LS*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 1894), p. 27.

[303] Ibid, p. 30.

[304] Widney, *California of the South*, pp. 61-100.

Development came to a crescendo when railroad competition and the influx of winter visitors sparked a real estate boom centred in Los Angeles County which lasted from 1886 to 1888.[305] City lots were traded as land values rose almost daily. The speculative frenzy collapsed under absurdly inflated prices, briefly damaging Southern California's growing national reputation. As Charles Turrill of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce wrote,

> During the winter season of the year…the number of visitors to Southern California is greater than at any other time. Without any fixed occupation except the pursuit of pleasure, it is natural that these should frequently be induced by the flaring advertisements and by all the machinery of the real estate gambler, to speculate in lots. And…it is only the unlucky who squeal. Such has been the case in Southern California.[306]

Despite the speculative hangover and negative press, however, the region rebounded quickly. Furthermore, the boom had confirmed American desires to benefit from semi-tropical California financially as well as in terms of health and pleasure. As the Southern California Bureau of Information stated in 1893, "This Southern California climate has a specific money value…a definite commercial value above and beyond its desirability as a means of imparting renewed life and vigour to the sick and dependent."[307]

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[305] Glenn Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California* (San Marino: Huntington, 1944).

[306] Letter from Charles Turrill [General Manager, San Diego Chamber of Commerce] to the Editor of the *Times-Democrat*, New Orleans, Louisiana (Aug 16, 1888). [Charles Turrill Papers, CHS]

[307] Brook, *The Land of Sunshine*, p. 9.

The boom-and-bust exposed some of the contradictions within the tourism promotion, to be sure. Surveying the height of the boom, Charles Dudley Warner authored the following verdict: "If the present expectations of transferring half-frozen Eastern and Northern people there by the railway companies and land-owners are half realised, Southern California, in its whole extent, will soon present the appearance of a mass-meeting, each individual fighting for a lot and for his perpendicular section of climate."[308] While booster groups would have appreciated acknowledgement of their role in attracting "half-frozen Eastern and Northern people," the prophecy of a swarming Southern California would have riled those who depicted an idyllic destination free from exasperating problems of modern materialism. "For the invalid or tired one of the world," one representative statement went, "there are [in Southern California] soft tones, divine odours and restful breezes to lull him into forgetfulness of the rush and hurry and stress and toil he has left behind."[309] Some astute promoters like Grace Ellery Channing recognised how rapid development put at risk this promotional narrative. Tourists desired pristine nature and Latin heritage, Channing observed in 1890, yet opportunities were diminishing. "For, year by year, as the ranches go, as the 'Greaser' and the Indian go, as all the semi-tropical Spanish Bohemianism is driven farther back, the picturesque-loving tourist takes refuge more and more in 'tramping' it through the by-ways of California."[310]

For Southern California's tourism promoters, however, the nostalgia had its limits. The "driving back" of the region's "Spanish Bohemianism" by modern development was also cited as evidence of a laudatory racial transformation: a shift from Latin to Anglo

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[308] Warner, "Golden Hesperides", pp. 48-9.

[309] M .E. W., "A Home in Southern California", *LS*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (November 1894), p. 117.

[310] Grace Ellery Channing, "The Basket of Anita", *Scribners*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (August 1890), p. 206.

dominance. The Spanish Fantasy Past served as a springboard for Anglo rejuvenation in new pleasure resorts. As Charles Keeler wrote, "The power of the missions is gone, the people to whom they ministered are largely dead and scattered, and the buildings are rapidly crumbling into dust,….They hold the poet and painter in their spell, but for the pleasure-seeker there are brighter scenes and happier hours awaiting in the modern centres of life, where the past is forgotten and where the days are too short to crowd in all the diversions which are at hand."[311] This life of outdoor pleasures was helping to produce Anglo-Americans who were healthier than the "nervously exhausted" men and women of the East. A magazine article on the "California Woman" declared, "First and best of all, California offers woman Nature's greatest gift, good health," such that it was "a frequent occurrence to hear tourists and visitors comment favourably upon the physiques of the California women," who were "much taller than the average women of the Middle and Atlantic Coast States," "more robust," and "rosier, healthier and prettier". Highlighting the connection between environment and human evolution, the writer added that this improved condition was "largely a result of our delightful out-of-door weather."[312]

Tourists, meanwhile, reinforced Southern California's evolving reputation as a semi-tropical resort for white Americans. In 1895, Elizabeth Bacon Custer, the widow of General Custer, recounted in a California magazine her railroad journey across "the long strip of American desert, the heat and dust of the Mojave," which had made her group long to be "rewarded…after coming out of that hopeless country, with every evidence of tropical

[311] Keeler, *Southern California*, p. 135.

[312] "The Woman in California", *California Homeseeker*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April 1902), p. 129 [SFPL].

luxuriance."[313] They were not disappointed, finding Southern California to be semi-tropical like Italy but far superior in terms of society. "It is difficult in Italy to escape from the sight of beggars, from squalor and poverty" and "the odours of the loathsome surroundings," Custer wrote. These conditions were absent in Southern California, however, where the "old missions of Southern California add immensely to the picturesqueness of the land." American tourists could "see all that nature can do" but "are at the same time in the midst of our own countrymen, the most delightful people in the world, and made more so by the sunshine which mellows and enriches nature." The environment enabled physical and psychological renewal. "There is nothing like the effect that life in the open air has upon the disposition as well as the health," Custer wrote – a message which was supported by the image accompanying the article. Captioned "Spend Your Life on the Verandahs," it showed a white couple relaxing amid the leafy vegetation of a Southern California garden:

[313] Elizabeth Bacon Custer, "Memories of 'Our Italy'", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 1895), p. 51.

Fig. 2.3 – *Spend Your Life on the Verandahs* picture (1895)[314]

Such images of civilised leisure infused the promotional texts of Southern California. As Custer wrote, "I think over all the lovely features of that semi-tropical land, [and] they all beckon to me to return."[315]

The booster ideal of "healthier" Anglo-Americans developing in semi-tropical California was captured in the cover of *The Land of Sunshine*, a pamphlet published by the Southern California Bureau of Information and disseminated at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago. The image showed in the foreground a flowering garden and a classically-dressed

[314] "Spend Your Life on the Verandahs" picture in Custer, "Memories", *LS*, p. 57.

[315] Ibid, p. 58.

woman (reminiscent of Columbia from earlier paintings celebrating westward expansion). An embodiment of youth and healthfulness, she held a bough of oranges against her loins, implying a connection between the fruitfulness of California and its human inhabitants:

Fig. 2.4 – *Land of Sunshine: Southern California* Cover (1893) [BrL][316]

Behind her spread a serene landscape of tall palms, orchards, and Franciscan mission – all symbols of the region's semi-tropical tourist appeal. But the land was marked also by clear signs of American technological enterprise and modernity: a steamship and steam engine,

[316] Cover of Brook, *Land of Sunshine*.

showing a semi-tropical land which thrived with "energetic" progress. Indeed, the approving gaze of the woman fell in the direction of the steam-powered innovations of industrial technology, affirming them as benign, but not dominant, features of this "land of sunshine". Sufficiently domesticated by technology, Southern California represented a semi-tropical opening for Anglo-Americans, who need not fear any tropical hindrances. Thus the pamphlet read by the Chicago fairgoers declared, "There is none of the depressing heat or the insect pests which drive visitors from Florida as soon as summer commences. It is not an enervating climate, but bracing…a climate that makes the sick well and the strong more vigorous."[317]

Semi-tropical Florida for Health and Pleasure

As winter tourism became a bigger phenomenon in America, Southern California promoters grew wary of the post-war recovery of the Gulf South, and in particular Florida. The two states were increasingly linked by booster visions of restorative climates and natures, as was noted by the self-titled "Exile" in an 1882 letter to the *Florida Dispatch.* The author had travelled for health reasons to Santa Barbara, California from Pennsylvania, where he had owned a farm neighbouring that of the recipients of his correspondence, the Ashmead brothers, who had since moved to Jacksonville, Florida, and become publishers of the *Dispatch*. Like numerous boosters, including the *Los Angeles Times*, which reprinted his letter, Exile saw a strong connection between their new homes. **"**Florida and California are the twin sisters of Uncle Sam, separated, to be sure, by a long distance, but having many points of similarity," including historical foreignness, climatic value, and

[317] Brook, *Land of Sunshine*, p. 10.

developmental opportunities.[318] "First, they have both been obtained from the Spanish, the relics of whose civilisation, language and customs still remain as a fringe to the social life of the inheritors. Then, too, both claim an unexceptionable climate; but are sparsely settled, both are rich in undeveloped possibilities, and both are washed by the ocean." To be sure, the differences were "probably more emphatic" – "sloppy" Florida, for example, being flatter and wetter, while mountainous California's rainy season came in winter not summer – and personal preferences were inevitable: "The arid parched look of nature [in Southern California] from June to November is at first gruesome; but I must believe that our drier country and our lack of rank vegetation are advantages not possessed by Florida." His conclusion, however, was that a special union existed between Southern California and Florida, with both states "competing" for and receiving seasonal influxes of "exile[d]" Americans: "The over-worked busy men and the nervously prostrated women of the colder North."[319]

Although small numbers of invalids had travelled to the state before the Civil War, Florida's emergence as an American "sanitarium" occurred in the decades after 1870.[320] The vast majority of tourists came to the Northeastern part of Florida, staying "chiefly in the sea-board towns" of Jacksonville and St. Augustine, from where they visited freshwater spas like Silver Spring and took steamboat trips along the St. Johns and Ocklawaha

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[318] Exile, "Florida and California", *Florida Dispatch*, p. 213 [UF]. The letter was reprinted in "Twin Sisters – Comparison and Contrasts between Florida and California", *Los Angeles Times* (August 1, 1882), p. 3.

[319] Exile, "California and Florida", p. 213.

[320] See Nathaniel P. Willis, *Health Trip to the Tropics* (New York: C. Scribner, 1853).

rivers.[321] Geography and hotel and railroad construction made these the logical destinations since Americans arrived by boat and train into Jacksonville, the state's "entrepot", at a time when few railroads penetrated into the peninsula. The Civil War, limited state finance, and complex litigation issues together meant that Florida's railroad mileage increased barely between 1860 and 1880, from 402 to 518 miles.[322] In the 1880s, however, magnates Henry Plant and Henry Flagler, receiving generous land grants from the state's Redeemer governments, constructed railroad networks and lavish hotels down the Gulf and Atlantic coasts, "opening" the peninsula to extensive winter tourism. In 1888 New Englander George Canning Hill thus proclaimed that "the rest of the country has found its Persian gardens" in Florida's new resorts, which were being built down "a peninsula [which] projected…into the neighbourhood of the tropics".[323]

Like Southern California, tourism to Florida evolved from a phenomenon primarily built around climatic health into a growth industry infused with ideas of pleasure and leisure. Promoters centred on two tropes: the recuperative qualities of climate and the peninsula's "wildness of tropical vegetation," which suggested "primitive" benefits for visitors in terms of masculine virtues and feminine fertility.[324] Unlike in the Pacific State, no Spanish Fantasy Past was constructed to sell Florida, aside from the local promotion of St. Augustine (the capital of Spanish Florida) and recurrent references to conquistador

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[321] John F. Richmond, *Sumter County, Florida: Its Situation, Climate, Soil, Productions, People, Transportation, Lines, Lakes, Rivers* (Philadelphia: McCalla & Stavely, 1882), p. 6 [FSU].

[322] Mayo, *Florida – An Advancing State*, p. 99.

[323] George Canning Hill, "Florida for the Winter", *New England Magazine*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (March 1888), pp. 209-16.

[324] Edward King, *The Southern States of America* (London: Blackie & Son, 1875), p. 378.

Ponce de Leon's legendary quest for the Fountain of Youth. Daniel G. Brinton's 1869 guidebook thus commented that the "ancient fame [of the Fountain of Youth] still clings to the peninsula," where "the tide of wanderers in search of the healing and rejuvenating waters still sets thitherward."[325] But, whereas California boosters imagined an entire pre-modern Spanish backdrop of ease and romance, promoters of peninsular Florida largely eschewed its history as a destructive mess of European trading, Indian Wars, slavery, and sectional strife. In the words of Manatee County booster Samuel Upham, "Florida…has, during the past 350 years, been hustled about from pillar to post like a shuttle-cock."[326]

The Florida peninsula (if less so the panhandle) was also largely exempt from the "Old South" imagery of cotton plantations and aristocratic planters which, as Nina Silber has shown, pervaded Northern tourism to the South.[327] Florida boosters, to be sure, echoed their counterparts across the South in playing upon Yankee anti-modernist fantasies by depicting their state as a therapeutic alternative to the "active business country" of the North, where "many persons…have been overworked, and present a breach in the chain of those vital processes whose continuity constitutes health."[328] As Silber writes, "No longer preoccupied with wartime anguish and destruction, northerners of the post-Reconstruction years increasingly thought of the South in tourist terms, as a land of leisure, relaxation, and

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[325] Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, *A Guide-Book of Florida and the South, for Tourists, Invalids, and Emigrants* (Philadelphia: Geo. Macle, 1869), p. 32 [UNF].

[326] Samuel Upham, *Notes from Sunland, on the Manatee River, Gulf Coast of South Florida, Its Climate, Soil and Productions* (Philadelphia: E. Claxton & Co., 1881), p. 49 [USF].

[327] Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 66-92.

[328] Kenworthy, *Climatology of Florida*, quoted in Davidson, *The Florida of To-Day*, p. 57.

romance."[329] Southern promoters played upon these longings for a "welcome retreat from northern modernity," and Florida was no different in that way.[330] Brinton's 1869 guide thus warned, "The harassing strain of our American life, our over-active, excitable, national temperament" made advisable a "timely and judicious change of climate," with Florida the ideal destination.[331] Commissioned by the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad in 1875 to write a travel guide, the poet Sidney Lanier espoused, "The question of Florida is a question of an indefinite enlargement of many people's pleasures and of many people's existences as against that universal killing ague of modern life – the fever of the unrest of trade throbbing through the long chill of a seven-months' winter."[332] The health claims were aided by a report by the Surgeon-General of the United States Army which stated that "as respects health the climate of Florida stands pre-eminent".[333] Quoted extensively in promotional texts, the statistical report indicated the mildness of malaria in Florida as compared to elsewhere in the country, thereby confuting notions about the state's swamp-like conditions (in winter, at least).[334] By 1880 Florida was being hailed as a "world-renowned winter

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[329] Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*, pp. 66-7.

[330] Ibid, pp. 80-82.

[331] Brinton, *A Guide-Book of Florida*, pp. 57, 115-131.

[332] Sidney Lanier, *Florida: Its Scenery, Climate and History* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott & Co., 1876), pp. 12-13 [UF].

[333] The Report of Surgeon-General Lawson of the United States Army quoted in A. A. Robinson [State Commissioner of Immigration], *Florida: A Pamphlet Descriptive of its History, Topography, Climate, Soil, Resources, and Natural Advantages* (Tallahassee: Florida Bureau of Immigration, 1882), p. 13 [FSU].

[334] Surgeon-General Lawson's Report in Davidson, *The Florida of To-Day*, pp. 54-55. See also Dr. Baynard Byrne, "Letter No. 1", *Florida and Texas* (Ocala: East Florida Banner Office, 1866), p. 5.

resort" of benefit to "the sensitive invalid, to the over-taxed student, or to the worn and weary business man, seeking rest and recruitment."[335]

But Florida boosters differed from their Southern counterparts by selling a "tropical" or "semi-tropical" tourist destination. For its promoters, the peninsula resembled the Caribbean as much as the American South, prompting climatic comparisons with Cuba and Barbados.[336] The Caribbean link incorporated travel itineraries too. Florida excursion companies encouraged tourists to visit Havana and Nassau, often after seeing Key West – a town where "the number of Cubans and Spaniards seen, the queer and incessant jargon of foreign tongues add much towards its tropical and non-American appearance".[337] Yet the Caribbean connection also underlined the booster vision of Florida as a tropical release from over-civilisation. The Clyde Steamship Company explained in its pamphlets that as ships from New York approached the St Johns River "the passengers have their first glimpse of tropical Florida, and it is a fascinating and picturesque one."[338] The peninsula's verdant nature implied tropical shores. Palatka, a winter resort town on the St. Johns River, offered "green foliage and golden fruit [which] give the locality a picturesque and semi-tropical appearance"; beyond the town, the river "contracts," the "trees and foliage grow

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[335] Atlantic & Gulf Railroad General Passenger Department, *Guide to Southern Georgia and Florida* (Savannah: Morning News Steam Printing House, 1879), p. 29 [UF]. Tyler, *Where To Go In Florida*, p. 7.

[336] Robinson, *Florida: A Pamphlet*, p. 10.

[337] "Extreme Southern Florida", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April 10, 1882), p. 6. For travel itineraries, see *Florida, A Trip From Jacksonville to Havana* (Jacksonville: Florida East Coast Railway, 1900) [UF].

[338] Clyde Steamship Company, *Beautiful St. John's River Through the Heart of Tropical Florida* (Clyde Steamship Company, 1896), p. 2 [UNF].

thicker and more tropical," and the "tropic heavens smile upon the weird and wondrous scene [which] thrills the traveller's soul".[339]

Florida's tropical "scenes" were shown to be safely reached by modern technology, however. The cover of an 1882 tourist guide, *Illustrated Florida*, thus presented a jungle-like coastal setting of palm trees, birds, and alligators, in which a steamship floated in the background – the latter a necessary reminder that the "accessories of civilisation" navigated this corner of Semi-Tropical America:

Fig. 2.5 – *Illustrated Florida* Cover (1882) [UF][340]

[339] Henry Lee, *The Tourist's Guide of Florida: Illustrated with Wood-Cut Scenes of Florida, Etc.* (New York: Leve & Alden Printing Co., 1885), pp. 131, 146 [UF].

[340] *Illustrated Florida* (Buffalo: Dodge Art Publishing Co., 1882) [UF].

Visitors to the state imbibed the promotional narrative of tropical adventure. A female tourist bound on a train for Florida in 1876 mused:

> Now we have fairly set our faces towards the tropics. Do I consider St. Augustine…as situated in the tropics?...[I replied] that I am open to conviction on the matter, but that I certainly supposed that Florida was – perhaps it *would* be more accurate to say semi-tropical.[341]

The gendered benefits of semi-tropical tourism also informed the promotional imagery of Florida. These often supported a patriarchal view in which white men combated effete over-civilisation through virile activities like hunting, whereas women were "released" from the supposedly un-womanly demands of urban modernity which fostered nervous exhaustion. As one tourist guide explained, "In no other country are the daughters (the future mothers of the nation) so *rapidly* educated [and] stimulated to abnormal mental exertion".[342] This (unfortunate) consequence of progress had "rapid[ly] increase[d]…the number of nervous women" in America.[343] Anxieties over falling birth rates reinforced the sense that Northern women were being "abnormally" affected by urban life, from which semi-tropical Florida offered respite. Brinton thus found much to admire in the potential effects of the state's climate on Northern women:

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[341] Emphasis in original: Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, "Going South", *Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 37 (January 1876), p. 29.

[342] *Bethesda*, np.

[343] Ibid, np.

> A warm climate promises aid where medicines are utterly ineffectual. I mean in marriages not blessed by offspring. Most readers know how early females are married in the tropics. Mothers of fourteen and sixteen years are not uncommon. Heat stimulates powerfully the faculty of reproduction.[344]

White tourists could expect the tropical fertility to be passed on to their own bodies. This idea implicitly raised other, more problematic, issues relating to the effects of tropical "heat". Frederick Pike writes how Euro-Americans saw "tropical races" – African Americans, in particular, but also Latin Americans – as sexually licentious and unrestrained.[345] For Helen Hunt Jackson, then, the "heat" of the tropics "stimulated" in its inhabitants not only fertility but certain baser instincts; "passions". This potentially endangered Victorian sexual and gender codes. But Brinton located the "tropicalisation" of Yankee women in Florida's climate within a clear political framework: "The wives of the French colonists in Algiers are notably more fertile than when in their Northern homes."[346] For French colonists in Algiers, he saw Anglo tourists in Florida. If the latter were not colonial rulers, they could nevertheless derive similar benefits of semi-tropical exposure without succumbing to the degeneracy of the natives.[347]

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[344] Brinton, *A Guide-Book of Florida*, p. 119.

[345] Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America: Myths and Stereotypes of Civilisation and Nature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), pp. 54-59.

[346] Brinton, *A Guide-Book of Florida*, p. 119.

[347] Brinton, it should be noted, went on to become a leading American ethnologist and expert on the so-called hierarchy of peoples, writing, in his 1890 book *Races and Peoples*, that "the European or white race stands at

Heightened female fertility in semi-tropical Florida appeared to shape the thinking of another promoter who, in an 1888 pamphlet, included it as part of a comparison between Florida and Southern California. "The climate of Southern California is masculine, while that of Florida is feminine. The climate of Southern California will benefit the male sex more readily, while that of Florida acts more speedily upon females".[348] Perhaps he was basing this curious analysis also on the gendered populations of the states. Because of the Gold Rush, 1850 California was predominantly male (over 90%); despite evening out in subsequent decades, males still constituted 60% of the state population in 1880. Florida, by contrast, had a nearly even split between the sexes:

Fig. 2.6 – Table of Male & Female Population Percentages, California & Florida (1850-1900)

Year	**California** % male	**California** % female	**Florida** % male	**Florida** % female
1850	92.4	7.6	52.5	47.5
1860	71.9	28.1	51.9	48.1
1870	62.3	37.7	50.0	50.0
1880	59.9	40.1	50.6	49.4
1890	57.7	42.3	51.6	48.4
1900	55.3	44.7	52.1	47.9

Historical Statistics of the United States – Millennial Edition – Vol. 1 – Population (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 1-27, p. 1-213.

His statement was hardly representative of Florida's tourism promoters in general, however, who advocated the ways in which their state "acted" upon male as well as female

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the head of the list, the African or negro at its foot": Daniel G. Brinton, *Races and Peoples: Lectures on the Science of Ethnography* [1890] (Philadelphia: D. McKay, 1901), p. 8.

[348] John W. Ashby, *Alachua – The Garden County of Florida – Its Resources and Advantages* (Gainesville: Alachua County Immigration Association, 1888), p. 19 [UF].

tourists, notably improving "the worn-out man of business [who] will find the necessary relaxation from 'brain-fag'" in myriad "opportunities to take outdoor exercise, plenty of sunshine, pure and bracing air," and other, more violent, pursuits.[349]

Florida was sold to tourists as a "hunter's paradise" – a wilderness in which male visitors could temporarily leave behind the plush and "effete" surroundings of the hotel and indulge in un-civilised pursuits befitting a tropical environment. "Here," declared a pamphlet for the Hotel Ormond, "civilisation and the wilderness sit cheek by jowl."[350] America's wilderness vogue found a particularly potent type of nature in Florida's semi-tropics, which served as a site for masculine renewal, supplying what Richard Slotkin describes as the Anglo-American faith in "regeneration through violence".[351] Boosters depicted an animal bounty awaiting conquest and invigorating male visitors frustrated at urban lives which divorced them from the frontier virtues of earlier Americans.[352] On steamers down the St. Johns, Indian and Ocklawaha rivers, "the Heart of Tropical Florida," white male tourists shot at all manner of creatures, including alligators, which were rapidly reduced along those waterways.[353] Female visitors like Harriet Beecher Stowe objected to the blood sports but hunting became integral to Florida's semi-tropical appeal. Reflecting the state's reputation for hunting a female visitor wrote that "with sharks and alligators and moccasins, and so on, you may be said to be in the tropics," given her "misty impression

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[349] Kenworthy, *Climatology of Florida*, quoted in Davidson, *The Florida of To-Day*, p. 57.

[350] *Hotel Ormond* (1891), p. 2. [Brochure 4173 – Ephemera, UF].

[351] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

[352] See *Views of Florida* (Portland: Chisholm Bros., 1890s) [UNF].

[353] Clyde Steamship Company, *Beautiful St. John's River*, p. 1.

that you are in the tropics when you get among things that bite".[354] Florida railroad and steamship companies described a "Paradise for Sportsmen" where "the tourist, with a passion for hunting, may find good sport" in the "succession of forests, prairies, 'hammocks', swamps and marshes".[355] There was an export value to the hunting craze too: by 1890 "Alligator Hides and Teeth," alone, were estimated to be worth $40,000 annually to Florida's economy.[356] But the opportunity to hunt "things that bite," as well as birds, was of greatest significance as a tourist attraction. Guidebooks informed that male tourists could "get far away from all signs of civilisation on many of Florida's streams".[357] Along with fishing – an 1882 publication stated how "the great variety and excellence of the fish in Florida is not one of the least attractions, whether to the sportsman or more practical housewife" – hunting reinforced booster visions of Florida as a semi-tropical source for masculine "regeneration".[358]

As with Southern California, the promotion of a semi-tropical escape from over-civilisation fuelled real estate interest and internal improvements in Florida, including a southward expansion into the peninsula. The state's railroad facilities grew rapidly between 1880 and 1885, when Northern investment produced more than 1,000 miles of tracks state-

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[354] Phelps, "Going South", p. 29.

[355] Joseph Richardson [FECR General Passenger Agent], *Florida, the East Coast and the Keys* (St. Augustine: Florida East Coast Railway Company, 1895), p. 24 [UCF]. See Susan A. Eacker, "Gender in Paradise: Harriett Beecher Stowe and Postbellum Prose on Florida", *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (August 1998), pp. 495-512.

[356] J. W. White, *Jacksonville, Florida and the Surrounding Towns* (Jacksonville: J. W. White, 1890), p. 21 [UF].

[357] Frank Presbrey, *Florida, Cuba, and Jamaica* (New York: Plant System, 1900), p. 22 [USF].

[358] Robinson, *Florida: A Pamphlet*, p. 41.

wide.[359] Travel from New York to Jacksonville was shortened to as little as thirty-six hours and made more comfortable with luxury trains like the Florida Special. Although tourist figures are hardly reliable, one pamphlet estimated that, in the winter of 1885, 164,000 visitors registered at Florida hotels – a figure almost half that of the resident population.[360] Northerner Henry Sanford, founder of the central Florida town bearing his name, hailed the internal improvements as confirmation of his "long time predictions about Florida as the winter resort for health and pleasure of the people north of it…The movement toward Florida to-day, I am satisfied, is but a driblet in comparison with the stream which, in steadily increasing volume, must inevitably pour down upon the only bit of semi-tropical country under our flag."[361]

Tourists now ventured beyond the Jacksonville-St. Augustine route to experience a more explicitly tropical Florida. From 1882 travellers heading from the St. Johns River to Titusville rode the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railway's *Tropical Trunk Line*, while tourists in Kissimmee in south-central Florida stayed in the town's Tropical Hotel. A promotional pamphlet explained, "Anyone having a fondness for exploration may reach within a few hours from Kissimmee as tropical, luxuriant and weird a wilderness as there is this side of Africa."[362] Rock Ledge on the Indian River boasted Tropical House, a hotel for 150 guests which advertised "boating, fishing, oysters, hunting, rocky shore, superb scenery, together with the finest Oranges, Bananas, Pineapples, and Guavas" – with rooms

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[359] John P. Varnum [Passenger Department, Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railway], *Florida, Its Climate, Productions and Characteristics* (New York: South Publishing Co., 1885), p. 3 [UF].

[360] *The Gulf Coast of Florida* (Chicago: Gulf Coast Land Company, 1885), p. 13 [UF].

[361] General Henry S. Sanford, "The Rush for Florida", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (May 1, 1882), p. 83.

[362] Presbrey, *Florida, Cuba, and Jamaica*, p. 12.

for $2.50 per night.[363] Affluent tourists purchased and built winter houses in new resorts like Winter Park, Maitland, and Longwood, which, a state guide declared, were "filled with the cottage homes of wealthy Northerners, who here spend the months from November to May, in the midst of orange groves, flowers, and the other surroundings of the semi-tropics".[364]

Pleasure tourism increasingly matched health-seeking as the motivation for Northerners coming to Florida. "It is no longer the invalids who have the monopoly in the migration southward," wrote Oliver Crosby in his 1887 guidebook. "It has become the fashion for people who can afford it to either own a cottage in an orange grove, or engage rooms at a hotel in our wonderful climate."[365] This shift moved the state into yet closer competition with Southern California, where promoters responded to Florida's popularity with often bitter appraisals.[366] An 1885 guide to the Southern Pacific's new Sunset Route, for example, featured a wise old traveller lecturing a naïve younger man on where to go for winter: "As I have said to you, dozens of times, drop Florida, at once and forever…[I]t amazes me unspeakably to witness the annual exodus of northern people to Florida as soon as the holidays are over."[367] The sage targeted social and environmental drawbacks to Florida, declaring that Americans were better off wintering in California because they

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[363] "Tropical House, Rock Ledge" advertisement in Lee, *The Tourist's Guide to Florida*, p. 212.

[364] Munroe, *The Florida Annual*, p. 44.

[365] Oliver M. Crosby, *Florida Facts both Bright and Blue: A Guide Book to Intending Settlers, Tourists, and Investors, from a Northerner's Standpoint* (New York: South Publishing Co., 1887), p. 80 [UWF].

[366] "California vs. Florida – The Tide of Winter Travel Sets Strongly Towards the West", *Daily Alta California* (May 28, 1887), p. 1.

[367] Nutting, *To the Pacific Coast via the Sunset Route*, p. 15.

would be "free from the petty extortions and annoying financial snares which are the inevitable accompaniment of hotel life in Florida," which was also unpleasantly "moist".[368] California promoters alternately evoked semi-tropicality to sell their state and denigrate their rival, playing on Anglo fears that Florida's climate was too tropical for whites, the damp, energy-sapping atmosphere hinted at in Exile's ominous reference to Florida's "rank vegetation".[369] The *Los Angeles Times* stated matter-of-factly that "the climate of Florida is admittedly inferior to that of Southern California."[370]

This was a two-way street. Complaining that the Pacific state's boosters "scruple not at anything that will build up California's reputation," including "defaming Florida and seeking to poison the public mind against her," Florida promoters employed identical – if inverted – tactics, often depicting California as desperately arid.[371] Florida's profuse nature, declared a writer in the *Dispatch*, was a boon compared to California since the latter was "a land barren of vegetation and fairly parched for want of water".[372] A degree of envy underpinned these criticisms, which intensified during Southern California's mid-1880s "boom". Florida's sellers complained that "the Californians evidently find it necessary to work their little boom for all it is worth while some of Florida's tourists for a change, have

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[368] Nutting, *To the Pacific Coast via the Sunset Route*, p. 15.

[369] Hosmer McKoon [President of the San Diego Chamber of Commerce], "Our Glorious Climate", *LS*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1894), p. 15.

[370] "California and Florida", *Los Angeles Times*, p. 4.

[371] "A Very Knowing Man", *Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (February 23, 1887), p. 60 [UF].

[372] "California Vs. Florida", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7 No. 22 (May 30, 1887), p. 464.

taken advantage of the low rates to take a look at that State."[373] That year Northern railroads ominously reported, "The California Movement – People Going to Southern California, Instead of Florida."[374]

At that time, however, Henry Plant and Henry Flagler – two Northern capitalists turned railroad and hotel promoters – gave new impetus to Florida tourism. The "Rhodeses of the American tropics," in C. Vann Woodward's apt phrasing, enjoyed a healthy intrastate competition. While the Plant System linked up the state's Gulf Coast, reaching the small town of Tampa in 1885 and opening the ornate Tampa Bay Hotel, Flagler accumulated existing tracks and then built new lines down the state's Atlantic coast, constructing the luxuriant hotels Alcazar and Ponce de Leon in St. Augustine in 1888 before extending links to South Florida.[375] Their hotels became social and sporting symbols of semi-tropical Florida. Players at Flagler's Alcazar Hotel thus took part in the Tropical Tennis Championship.[376] Like the Southern Pacific Company, meanwhile, the Plant Company and Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway Company incorporated railroads, passenger departments, land companies, and hotels into vast operations which impelled state promotion. As Gary Mormino and Raymond Arsenault write, "Flagler and Plant platted and

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[373] W., "California and Florida", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7, No. 23 (June 6, 1887), p. 486.

[374] "The California Movement", *Lewiston Evening Journal* (October 26, 1887), p. 1.

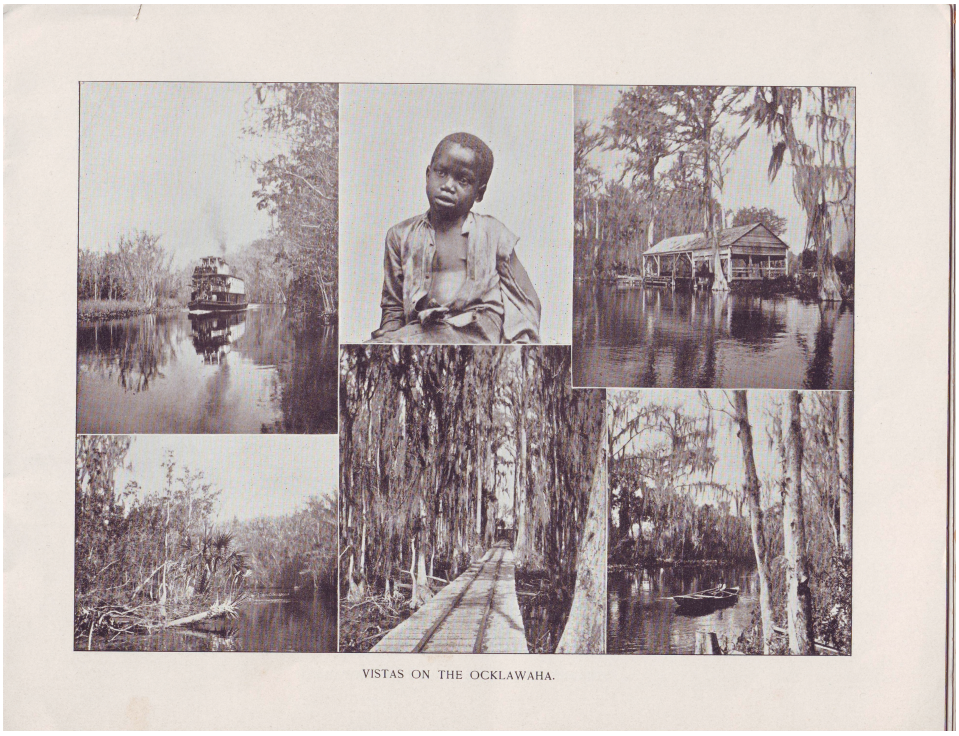
[375] C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877-1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), p. 110. Susan R. Braden, *The Architecture of Leisure: The Florida Resort Hotels of Henry Flagler and Henry Plant* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2002). Seth Bramson, "A Tale of Three Henrys", *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 23 (1998), pp. 112-143.

[376] Larry R. Youngs, "The Sporting Set Winters in Florida: Fertile Ground for the Leisure Revolution, 1870-1930", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 84 (Summer 2005), pp. 57-78.

plotted their railroads across peninsular Florida, ushering in the golden age of luxury, hotels, conspicuous consumption, and a reinvention of the 'American Riviera'."[377]

Promoting their resorts concurrent with the beginning of Jim Crow segregation in the state, meanwhile, Plant and Flagler's companies enticed wealthy white Northerners via interconnected images of semi-tropical leisure and African American subservience. They were far from alone in showing blacks as "picturesque" figures for Anglo consumption. The "Vistas on the Ocklawaha" advertised by a Florida steamship company thus included an African American child:

Fig. 2.7 – *Vistas on the Ocklawaha* photograph (~1890) [UF][378]



[377] Gary Mormino & Raymond Arsenault, "Introduction", in Braden, *Architecture of Leisure*, p. xviii.

[378] Photograph in *Beauties of the Ocklawaha and Tampa* (Philadelphia: J. Murray Jordan, ~1890) [UF].

Human "vistas" of African American natives were thus part of the visual imagery of semi-tropical Florida. The large hotel companies expanded these advertising motifs, casting black children and servants as smiling facilitators of Anglo-American leisure experiences. A Plant Company pamphlet thus advertised Florida's "finest health and pleasure resorts" with a photograph of three smiling African American children – evidence that Florida was home to easy contentment as well as first-class hotels:

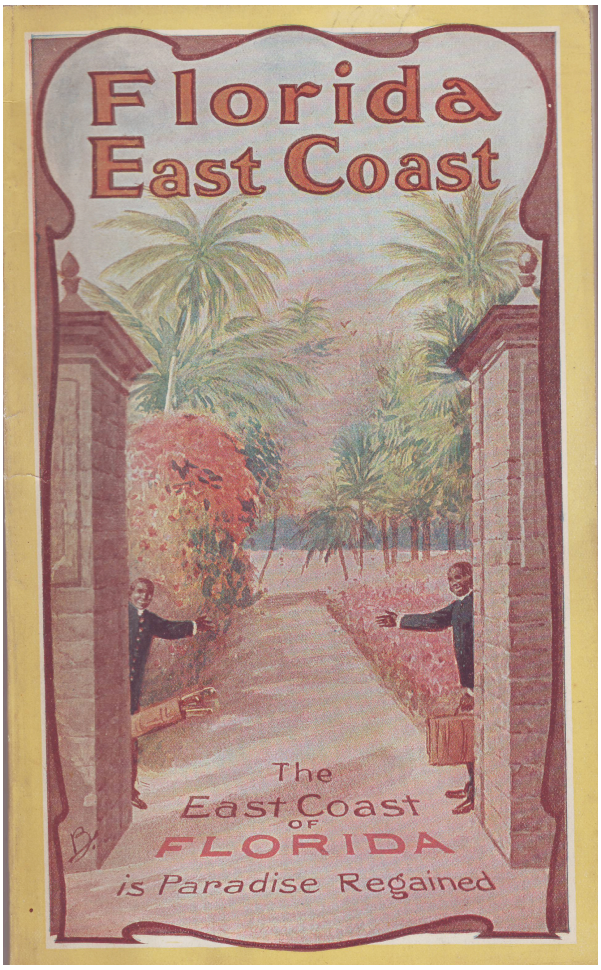
Fig. 2.8 – *Map of the Plant System* pamphlet (n.d.) [UF][379]

[379] Back cover of *Map of the Plant System – 5094 Miles* [Brochure 193 – Ephemera, UF].

The African American boys dressed in ragged clothes yet apparently happy in their lot provided implicit assurances of stable hierarchy for white tourists who entered a "winter playground" where black impoverishment existed alongside, albeit segregated from, luxuriant resorts.

Although white visitors were not advised to "tour" black neighbourhoods in Florida in the same way they were encouraged to see Chinatowns and "Spanish Towns" in Southern California, promoters explicitly located African Americans within the winter attractions of semi-tropical Florida. They did so by delineating the modern "role" of blacks in Florida. Depictions of African American servitude were commonplace, a perennial counterbalance to, but which also reinforced, the images of Anglo leisure. A railroad pamphlet fronted with the words, "The East Coast of Florida is Paradise Regained," thus showed two African American porters who held out a bag of golf clubs and a travel suitcase, as well as the promise of grinning subjugation as they pointed the way into edenic grounds:

Fig. 2.9 – *Florida East Coast* Cover (1904) [UF][380]



In such advertisements, the social control of African Americans became an attractive symbol for Anglo tourists, who saw in Florida an American state which satisfied colonialist appetites for tropical leisure and racial dominance.

The tropical-racial undertones of Florida tourism were perhaps most evident in the phenomenon of "Afromobiling". From the 1890s in South Florida coastal resorts, Afromobiles – rickshaw-type carts which tourists sat in while being pushed or pulled by

[380] *Florida East Coast: The East Coast of Florida is Paradise Regained* (Jacksonville: The Florida East Coast Railway Company, 1904) [UF].

African American hotel employees – became a popular form of transportation from the hotel to the beach, town, or golf course. Images of Afromobiling proliferated in promotional materials.[381] A dialogue in an 1891 pamphlet for the Hotel Ormond revealed the anti-modern thrill of the experience:

> 'What makes us go?' inquired a woman's voice from the depth of our car.
>
> 'It's not an underground cable,' said a man on the rear platform, craning his neck to look at the ground.
>
> 'Nor an electric', said another, looking skyward for the wire.
>
> 'It's a small beast,' exclaimed a third, peering over the dash-board.[382]

The "small beast" was in fact an African American man, on whose back the leisure travellers, thoroughly revelling in the experience, were being literally carried. In Flagler-developed Palm Beach, where motor cars were prohibited from its founding in 1893, Afromobiling became an iconic attraction of the exclusive resort, which was visited by capitalists such as Jay Gould and writers like Henry James.[383] Boosters fetishised the leisure experience of "a horseless carriage propelled by a motor with a smiling charcoal face".[384] Afromobiling became an enactment of Anglo desires for explicit forms of racial

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[381] See the front cover of *The Magnolia, St. Augustine, Florida* brochure (1900). *Florida* (Raymond-Whitcomb Tours to Florida and Cuba, 1920), p. 9 [Brochures 155, 175 - Ephemera, UF].

[382] *Hotel Ormond* brochure (Ormond, 1891) [Brochure 177 - Ephemera, UF].

[383] Henry James, *The American Scene* [1907] (New York: Scribner's, 1946), pp. 449-450.

[384] Nevin O. Winter, *Florida, the Land of Enchantment* (Boston: The Page Company, 1918), p. 248 [FAU].

hierarchy. As Harrison Rhodes wrote in a 1917 guidebook to "Vacation America," Palm Beach's "most characteristic sport is the wheel chair – the Afro-mobile, socalled from the black slave of the pedal who propels you."[385]

Through environmental, gendered, and racial imagery, wintering in Florida became a brand of "tropical repose" unimaginable in the "busy" North; for one incoming Yankee, the "tropical gardens" and "luxuriant surroundings" of the state's coastal hotels "excite in the mind visions of life in the orient".[386] Yet promoters always controlled these "orientalised" fantasies within the security of modern American customs. Tourists who purchased winter homes on Florida's east coast were thus said to enjoy "such luxuries of the Tropics with comforts of the Temperate Zone!"[387] The state's African American population were similarly contained within colonialist visions of solid racial hierarchy. Florida was sold as a tropical land providing for renewed Anglo-American "health" and "wealth" – a vision which shaped its expanding tourism industry and evolving identity throughout the late nineteenth century. As in a 1901 pamphlet by the Florida East Coast Railway for the state's leading hotel and golf resorts, tourists were enticed to the peninsula in order to experience "America's tropical kingdom."[388]

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[385] Harrison Rhodes, "In Vacation America", reproduced in *St. Cloud Tribune* (January 11, 1917), p. 3.

[386] King, *Southern States*, p. 401. Hill, "Florida for the Winter", p. 220.

[387] H. K. Ingram, *Florida, Beauties of the East Coast* (Jacksonville: Jacksonville, St. Augustine & Indian River Railway, 1892), p. 52 [UNF].

[388] *America's Tropical Kingdom* (Jacksonville: Florida East Coast Railway, 1901) [UF].

Conclusion

From the 1870s, tourism promoters of semi-tropical California and Florida enticed Americans through visions of healthful nature and renewing leisure. Growing anxieties about over-civilisation in the urban North gave impetus to these representations of American states which possessed "tropical" traits of primitivism and romance. For Anglo-American tourists, Southern California and Florida appeared safer versions of exotic travel: the healthfulness and diversions of the tropics but from within American borders. This enabled the colonialist imagery that promoters infused into their texts, in which racial and economic domination over contented ethnic and racial minorities was presented as a backdrop for the restorative leisure of Anglo elites.

Although the promotional themes differed in the two states, they both fed into development of the regions. Southern California's boosters cultivated a Spanish Fantasy Past which encouraged visitors to luxuriate in a romantic version of history based around ruined missions, Franciscan friars, and dark-eyed Spanish ladies. Modern Mexican poverty was converted into historical artefact through a mythology which commodified the sense of Southern California's foreign, semi-tropical origins and a new natural environment which stripped modern civilisation of its industrial excesses.[389] The promotional constructions of a pre-capitalist Spanish society supported capitalist development of Southern California. Los Angeles swelled from a population of 11,000 in 1880 to 50,000 ten years later, as escape from over-civilisation became a precursor for those "civilised" archetypes of business investment and material development. As T. D. Stimson – a "Chicago capitalist" and investor in California – wrote in 1894, Southern California had "transformed from a

[389] See the chapter on "La Fiesta de Los Angeles" in Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, pp. 49-90.

somewhat isolated health resort into a beautiful and prosperous region, where health, pleasure and business may be found in combination."[390]

Florida, meanwhile, competed successfully with Southern California as a winter resort. Where California promoters used semi-tropical comparisons, however, Florida boosters often proudly cast the peninsular as a tropical proposition.[391] "Southern Florida," a travel writer stated in 1883, "is really the tropical region, the Egypt of the United States" – "a delightful region wherein to enjoy a perfect summer climate during the winter months."[392] As discussed in the next chapter, this tendency hurt Floridian attempts to attract white settlers, who were reluctant to inhabit "torrid" tropical regions. For tourists, however, Florida's tropicality conveyed strong attractions of healthful nature, as boosters stressed "a moral, as well as a physical benefit, from this communion with the primitive world."[393] The railroad companies which constructed luxury hotels down Florida's coasts in the 1880s carried on these tropes and disseminated representations of African American servitude which complemented Anglo notions of tropical leisure.

Although it is impossible to quantify the influence of promoters in attracting tourists, the tourism industries expanded dramatically in both Southern California and Florida, which became prime destinations for American health and pleasure tourists. As the *Los Angeles Times* reported in 1891, "Florida is the leading competitor of California as a winter resort in the United States."[394] Seasonal tourism was an engine of economic growth

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[390] T. D. Stimson, "Sunshine and Eastern Capital", *LS*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1894), p. 15.

[391] *Semi-Tropic California* (San Francisco: Southern Pacific Company, ~1898).

[392] Lady Duffus Hardy, *Down South* (London: Chapman and Hill Limited, 1883), pp. 115-116 [UNF].

[393] Tyler, *Where To Go In Florida*, p. 3.

[394] "California and Florida", *Los Angeles Times* (May 19, 1891), p. 4.

in both states, creating increased tax revenues and internal improvements, while affluent visitors purchased lands and winter homes.[395] In 1899 the California State Board of Trade remarked with envy that approximately "200,000 tourists visit Florida in each season and leave there not less than $10,000,000".[396] Thus, even as they denigrated one another, Southern California and Florida benefited from a rivalry which not only provided a healthy competition – the promotion and growth of "Semi-Tropic California" giving inspiration to the sellers of "Semi-Tropic Florida," and vice versa – but also legitimised the transformations of exotic lands into America's "winter playgrounds".[397]

In the process, promoters shaped American conceptions of leisure as a vital activity. Nationally by 1900, Cindy Aron writes, "the middle class had established vacationing as a requirement for its physical health and for its spiritual and emotional well-being as well."[398] Crucial to this shift, Southern California and Florida were re-imagined as semi-tropical brands of American "spiritual and emotional well-being". According to their boosters, the two states provided not only climatic ease from harsh winters but also tropical release from the worst effects of over-civilised modernity. Southern California and Florida thus enabled Anglo tourists to live out ideas of tropical leisure and renewal without having to leave their

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[395] *LS*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 1894), p. 13.

[396] Gen. N. P. Chipman [President and Chairman of the Committee on Industrial Resources for the Year 1899], *California…Its Resources and Advantages – Tenth Annual Report* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1900), p. 44 [SFPL].

[397] "Lower California as a Winter Resort", *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 1, No. 46 (November 14, 1874), p. 364. William Winter, "The California Movement versus Florida Apathy", *Florida Times-Union* (June 5, 1887), p. 2.

[398] Aron, *Working At Play*, p. 5.

own nation. As a Florida magazine observed in 1905, "There seems to be two favoured sections in our great big United States where climate, health as well as pleasure seekers go; California (Southern California) and Florida (Southern Florida), two little bits of land in all our Western hemisphere, where one can feel free from a killing frost and where they can get a breeze from the tropics."[399]

[399] "The Tide of Travel", *Florida East Coast Homeseeker*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (January 1905), p. 6.

Chapter 3

The Fruits of Labour:

Booster Visions of Republican Renewal and Semi-Tropical Agriculture

Extending beyond efforts to attract health and pleasure seekers, the visions of Semi-Tropical America pervaded the selling of settlement and agriculture in California and Florida. Designed to create more permanent population and agricultural growth, conceptions of labour rather than leisure dominated this literature. Railroad agents, land owners, agriculturists, and writers envisaged fecund lands where dedicated settlers could produce rare, profitable crops and achieve independence away from more industrialised regions where America's free labour ideology appeared increasingly threatened.[400] California and Florida boosters engaged with the agrarian myth of the West which cherished the expansion into and cultivation of "virgin" lands where "individuals could rise on their own through hard work".[401] Promoters modified this discourse to assert that an individual's efforts would be especially rewarded by the special climates and natures of Southern California and peninsular Florida. The regions were unique prospects which upheld traditional republican ideals of a "society of economically progressive, socially

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[400] Nell Irvin Painter, *Standing At Armageddon: The United States, 1877-1917* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1987), p. xxx.

[401] Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 230. For the agrarian myth of the West, see Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Knopf, 1957).

equal, and politically competent citizens" through the farming of semi-tropical fruits.[402] The Florida Land and Improvement Company declared of its ten to forty acre tracts on sale from $1.25 to $5 per acre, "Any enterprising man, even if his means are limited, can buy a farm, which in a few years, by good management and industry, will make him independent."[403] Healthy agriculture would in turn improve under-developed regions. "Small farms secure a thrifty, settled section, where churches and schools can be built, organised and enjoyed," wrote William H. Martin of the California Immigrant Union. "What a revenue to the industry and wealth of the State…would be secured, if some inducement could be made to those who are 'living from hand to mouth', to take up these valuable little spots, and make for themselves permanent, happy homes!"[404]

This chapter analyses the promotion of semi-tropical agriculture as the basis for republican societies in California and Florida. A complex blending of idealism and self-interest defined this settler promotion, which was more inclusive than tourist materials. Promoters targeted potential migrants from across classes, although, as populations and land values rose, they increasingly stressed the importance of "some capital" for settlers interested in horticulture.[405] Land boosters articulated capitalist and agrarian motivations,

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[402] Joyce Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), p. 50.

[403] *Florida, Its Climate, Soil and Productions* (New York: Florida Land and Improvement Company, 1881), p. 2 [UF].

[404] William H. Martin, *Supplement to All About California and the Inducements to Settle There* (San Francisco: California Immigrant Union, 1876), p. 7 [CHS].

[405] See "Southern California Immigration Association", *Los Angeles Times* (January 1886), np [CSL Scrapbooks].

with settlement and population growth (of the right kind) promising economic and social "revenues". "It is the proportion of increase [in population] that gives activity to business, and profit to the ownership of land," explained the Southern Pacific Railroad.[406] The railroads not only benefited from selling tickets and lands but also gained new shipping freights crucial to their long-term profits.[407] Financial imperatives were relevant to all land promoters, who featured a range of economic data, such as crop values, in their literature. Yet boosters cared for more than just bottom-line incentives. Shared ideals, hopes and anxieties regarding the kinds of societies which would develop in their states were equally significant. Seeing themselves as facilitators of steady progress, immigration promoters often excoriated crooked real estate speculators who promised "the Eden of garden-spots – the one Paradise of the earth," for undermining "the conscientious chronicler of sober truth".[408] As David Vaught writes of horticulturists in California, they "believed they were cultivating not only specialty crops, but California itself. Their mission was to promote both small, virtuous communities *and* economic development."[409] The dollar and the dream were similarly fused in the land promotion of Semi-Tropical America. Striving to entice

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[406] Jerome Madden [Land Agent, Southern Pacific Railroad], *California – Its Attractions for the Invalid, Tourist, Capitalist, and Homeseeker* (San Francisco: H.S. Crocker & Co., 1890), p. 18 [CSL].

[407] Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[408] James Wood Davidson, *The Florida of To-Day: A Guide for Tourists and Settlers* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1889), p. 105 [UCF].

[409] Emphasis in original: David Vaught, *Cultivating California: Growers, Specialty Crops, and Labor, 1875-1920* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 10.

migrants and sell lands, boosters aspired to republican visions of prosperous small-farming which informed the development of California and Florida.

Booster assertions of independent farming were a nationwide phenomenon, with promoters selling Kansas and Colorado, Georgia and Texas, as especially suited to successful farms.[410] Many of these promoters joined the Farmer's Alliances and the Populist movement, which, while attacking the evils of corporate wealth, sought local "transformation by boosting real estate values, strengthening links with the market, and developing the commercial structure of a modern agricultural society".[411] Their promotional narratives owed much to core American ideologies of republicanism and continental expansion. Hailing the social worth of the independent farmer tied to the soil, as opposed to the wage-earning dependency of the urban-dweller, western and southern boosters plugged into an agrarian mythology which had become "a mass creed, a part of the country's political folklore and…nationalist ideology".[412] Yet they were also fuelled by Gilded Age concerns over the consolidating effects of urbanisation and industrialisation which "undermined the vision of the small producers' republic".[413] To be sure, between 1860 and 1890 the number of farms in America almost tripled.[414] With widespread rural poverty, however, the children of farmers increasingly migrated to cities, and agrarian

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[410] Gilbert C. Fite, *The Farmers' Frontier, 1865-1900* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1966), pp. 15-34.

[411] Charles Postel, *The Populist Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 27.

[412] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Random House, 1955), p. 28.

[413] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. xxxvi.

[414] Postel, *The Populist Vision*, p. 26.

discontent grew into the Populist protest of the 1890s.[415] The modern realities of agricultural decline and urban wage labour contributed to a gradual re-evaluation of the free labour ideology. After Reconstruction, as Eric Foner has writes, "the dominant understanding of free labour" became "freedom of contract in the labour market, rather than ownership of productive property."[416]

This shift was made more traumatic by unprecedented levels of labour and class strife in America. Railroad strikes in 1877 spread across the nation's cities and were met with federal military force; coming after years of economic depression, the Great Strike ushered in an era of heightened class tensions unimaginable a few decades before.[417] The 1886 Haymarket Riot in Chicago reignited mainstream fears of social anarchy which had been festering since the Paris Commune, further evidence that, as the *Nation* had warned, America faced "the great curse of the Old World – the division of society into classes."[418] Industrial unrest sparked concerns for the country's democratic future. "The labour troubles of this and former years," an Eastern newspaper reported, "have caused serious alarm among thoughtful men for the safety of our institutions."[419] Bourgeois fears of social anarchy were matched by those of economic tyranny. Himself a beneficiary of the era's

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[415] Postel, *Populist Vision*, pp. 25-59. Robert C. McMath, *American Populism: A Social History, 1877-1898* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993).

[416] Foner, *Free Soil*, p. xxxvi.

[417] Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London, U.K.: Verso, 1990), pp. 303-4.

[418] *The Nation* (June 27, 1867) quoted in Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1888), p. 477. Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, pp. 47-50.

[419] "The Labor Problem and Its Remedy", *Albany Argus*, quoted in Warner Bros., *Southern California – A Semi-Tropic Paradise* (Los Angeles: California Excursion Association, 1887), p. 52 [CHS].

industrial expansion, Rochester railroad president Isaac Butts spoke for many when citing the concentration of wealth "in fewer and fewer hands" as the country's gravest problem.[420] For countless middle-class citizens, America's economic and urban "incorporations" had "wrenched…society from the moorings of familiar values".[421] The republican vision of a healthy and meritocratic society of producers – with most men, ideally, owning property – was brutally exposed by the corporate consolidation, poverty-ridden cities, and labour activism of post-war America.

As republican ideals underwent a painful divorce from Northern realities, however, they were projected onto other environments, including Southern California and peninsular Florida, which appeared at more primitive stages of social evolution: "new" in terms of Anglo settlement and agriculture, and untouched by divisive industrialisation.[422] Such locales potentially offered recourse to better social conditions under which "an industrious, economical and sober man, with or without a family, can…raise himself into independent and easy circumstances."[423] The once-maligned remoteness of the states thus became a virtue for promoters who advocated the "connection between agriculture and

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[420] Foner, *Reconstruction*, p. 477.

[421] Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1982), p. 7.

[422] For a few of the countless references to the two states as "new", see Theodore S. Van Dyke, *Southern California* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1886), p. 221 [BL]. D. H. Jacques, *Florida as a Permanent Home: Embracing a Description of the Climate, Soil, and Productions of the State* (Jacksonville: Chas. W. Blew, 1877), p. 7 [UF].

[423] J. M. Hawks, *The East Coast of Florida – A Descriptive Narrative* (Lynn: Lewis & Winship, 1887), p. 118. [Brochure 157, UF]

civilisation".[424] As technological processes which supported agricultural growth, irrigation in California and drainage in Florida complimented this promotional imagery and will be examined in greater depth in the next chapter – particularly as they came to dominate booster narratives of the "conquest" of interior deserts and swamps in the Progressive Era. The focus here is on the formative promotion of semi-tropical agriculture in the two states as a prosperous, republican occupation.

Land companies and state boosters in California and Florida constructed commercial semi-tropical variants of America's agrarian myth. Southern California and peninsular Florida were sold as agricultural ventures distinctive from declining farming elsewhere. Lauding reports that "the tendency of the agriculturists" in the state was "toward small farms," the *Florida Dispatch* pointed to California as another place where "the farmers who earn most money per acre are those who have twenty or thirty acres in grapes and other fruit."[425] Land promoters thus recalled the "myth of the garden" while focusing on the newness of semi-tropical agriculture and its benefits to republicanism. The states of "semi-tropic North America," a journalist explained, featured "a diversity of climate, of products, of people and of customs, which is unknown to any other portion of the habitable globe."[426] To be sure, these visions were not without their contradictions. They meshed awkwardly with Anglo conceptions of hotter regions as climatically enervating places (for

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[424] Mrs. Judge A. B. Bartlett, "The Connection between Agriculture and Civilisation" [Essay Read Before the Lake George Fruit Growers Association], *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 3, No. 7 (June 30, 1880), p. 49 [UF]. J. De Barth Shorb [President of the Southern California Horticultural Society], "Horticultural Fair – Closing Address of President Shorb", *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (November 1880), pp. 166-67 [BL].

[425] "Small Farms", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 21 (August 14, 1882), p. 322 [UF].

[426] Itinerant, "In the Semi-Tropics", *Los Angeles Times* (March 29, 1885), p. 4.

whites, at least), where natural fertility induced idleness and what little work was done had to be coerced.[427] A former slave state with a humid environment, Florida suffered greater than California from this discourse. State promoters felt the need to warn off potential settlers "who imagine they shall have nothing to do here, but to lie in the shade and eat oranges and bananas, as they fall dead-ripe at their feet," since, in fact, "industry, energy, and perseverance are essential to success, even in this genial climate."[428] Southern California boosters made similar appeals.[429] Nonetheless the distinctive rewards of labour in semi-tropical agriculture pervaded the booster literature of both states.

Their differences were also profound. As discussed in Chapter 1, popular perceptions and socioeconomic realities distinguished California from Florida. While promoters in each tapped into a benign faith in open land as the seedbed for republican independence, California held a stronger sectional position. As two historians have written, "For many Americans, the West was understood not only as a geographic reality, but also as an ideological basis for an essential American identity."[430] Thus, for Frederick Jackson Turner, "expansion westward with its new opportunities" and "perennial rebirth" had "furnish[ed] the forces dominating American character."[431] In immeasurable ways,

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[427] These are the essential points stated about tropical countries in Carl Schurz, "Manifest Destiny", *Harpers*, Vol. 87, No. 521 (October 1893), pp. 740-742.

[428] Jacques, *Florida as a Permanent Home*, p. 5.

[429] "Semi-Tropics", *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (April 1880), p. 80.

[430] Susan Harris Smith & Melanie Dawson (eds.), *The American 1890s: A Cultural Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 388.

[431] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* [1893] (New York: Ungar, 1963), pp. 1-2.

California took strength from this Western mythology, while Florida faced disadvantages in trying to attract industrious settlers in part because the South's ideological corollaries were comparatively "un-American": landed aristocracy, economic stagnation, military defeat. Florida was vulnerable to charges of Southern "backwardness" and a climate unfit for white labour. As John F. Richmond of the Sumter County Agricultural and Fruit Growers' Association wrote in 1882, "Many intelligent Americans believe to this day that Southern Florida, though desirable in winter, can be nothing but a sickly burning furnace in summer."[432] Southern California promoters compounded this belief. According to the *Riverside Press and Horticulturist* in 1887, "As a citrus fruit country, Florida is officially and practically taking a back seat. As a winter resort, Florida is to-day playing second fiddle to California. As a place of summer residence the State was always a failure."[433] Although both were regarded as "semi-tropical," California and Florida were not seen as identical.

The two states benefited from joint visions of semi-tropical agriculture, however. Their promoters cast semi-tropical agriculture as the foundation for societies relatively undisturbed by the republican death-knells heard in the post-war North, of urban drift, industrial unrest, and disturbing wealth gaps.[434] They articulated national anxieties about the diminishing prospects for independence based on one's own ability. Reporting on the

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[432] By "Southern Florida", he meant the entire peninsula south of the tourist destinations of the St. Johns River: John F. Richmond, *Sumter County, Florida: Its Situation, Climate, Soil, Productions…and its Advantages in general* (Philadelphia: McCalla & Stavely, 1882), p. 10 [FSU].

[433] *Riverside Press and Horticulturist* (August 27, 1887), reprinted in "California", *Florida Dispatch* (September 5, 1887), p. 747.

[434] Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, pp. 3-7.

state's fruit-growing industry in 1889, the California State Board of Trade declared, "What [man] seeks after all and above all is a region where his labour is worth most to him."[435] Promoters thus applied America's traditional free labour ideology to the fruitful returns of a semi-tropical land, depicting environments peculiarly suited to prosperous small farmers and a "virtuous" citizenry. "With the natural fertility of the soil, stimulated to the utmost by the warmth of the long summer, and unchecked by any severe chill to the winter, the productive capacity of the country and its power of supporting a dense population are very great," J. P. Widney wrote of Southern California.[436] The "tendency" was to a "more thorough subdivision of land," with twenty acres, "especially in the fruit districts," sufficient for the "united labours of a large family".[437] The vision was mirrored in Florida, where the Bureau of Immigration explained: "People are rapidly learning that whether they propose cultivating fruits or vegetables, small tracts well tilled are vastly more profitable than larger areas indifferently cultivated or partially neglected. The small places are the most profitable, and the most satisfactory to the owners."[438] Semi-tropical agriculture rewarded free labour while requiring less actual physical work: "a business demanding no

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[435] Gen. N. P. Chipman, *Report upon the Fruit Industry of California – Its Growth and Development and Present and Future Importance* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1889), p. 3 [CSL].

[436] Walter Lindley & J. P. Widney, *California of the South – Its Physical Geography, Climate, Resources, Routes of Travel, and Health-Resorts, Being a Complete Guide-Book to Southern California* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1888), p. 49 [CSL]. See also D. Edson Smith, "Ten Acres Enough to Support a Family", in Ibid, p. 369.

[437] Ibid, p. 49.

[438] A. A. Robinson [State Commissioner of Immigration], *Florida: A Pamphlet Descriptive of its History, Topography, Climate, Soil, Resources, and Natural Advantages* (Tallahassee: Florida Bureau of Immigration, 1882), p. 165 [FSU].

exhaustive labour".[439] Fruit-growing would thus be a pleasurable occupation far less arduous than "typical" farming elsewhere. "The possessor of a few acres in orange trees," Benjamin Truman announced, "is lifted above the ordinary drudgery of farm labour."[440]

"Labour" here referred to the older free labour conception of a person's energy directed towards making an independent living from the soil; thus it did not solely mean manual labour but, rather, the broader process of commercial agricultural production. Explicitly or not, then, Anglo boosters proclaimed the rewards for industry by white settlers, as cheap hired labour became factors in the expanding economies of California and Florida. Native Americans, Asians, and Mexicans, in California, and African Americans, in Florida, performed much of the harvest work and were desired by many white developers for precisely this reason, but as field labourers rather than equal citizens. The booster imagery of republican settlement provides insight into how these racial tensions and stratifications were made palatable by and for white promoters and settlers. Narratives of Anglo-American independence were paradoxically intertwined with allusions to non-white labourers who were available to – yet excluded from – the progressive agricultural civilisations emerging in the two semi-tropical states.

This agricultural progress was bound to the states' semi-tropical qualities. For promoters, their specialty "semi-tropical" products, especially citrus, would give producers a virtual monopoly of national markets. Here promoters borrowed from Jeffersonian conceptions of political economy: that a desirable agrarian society could remain prosperous and healthy so long as it had market connections to a more populous "metropolitan" area

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[439] Robinson, *Florida*, p. 172.

[440] Major Benjamin C. Truman, *Homes and Happiness in the Golden State of California* (San Francisco: H. S. Crocker & Co., 1884), p. 37 [BrL].

(previously, Europe but now the urban North and Midwest).[441] In purchasing products from the agricultural region, the metropolitan market would sustain the latter's independent constituency without exporting its social problems. As Joyce Appleby shows, this republican vision was profoundly commercial, championing market-oriented agriculture over purely self-sufficient farming.[442] Raising products for a metropolitan market was deemed crucial to the longevity of republicanism.

Land promoters of Southern California and Florida shared in this doctrine.[443] At a time when industrial dominance in the North was fomenting starker divides between workers and employers (and rampant capitalism was increasingly associated with social inequalities), boosters of the semi-tropical states resurrected the republican "vision of a free society of independent men prospering through an expansive commerce in farm commodities."[444] Rarely did they depict semi-tropical agriculture in terms of self-sufficiency; instead, settlers and growers would produce rare crops to be shipped to and sold in Northern and Midwestern cities, thereby obtaining a steady income which supported

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[441] For the early republican debates on American political economy, see Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), esp. pp. 76-105.

[442] Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 253-276.

[443] "Semi-Tropical Fruit – Our Market and Possible Production", *Sacramento Daily Union* (May 22, 1875), p. 1. William H. Mills, "Marketing California Fruits", *Californian*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (October 1892), pp. 703-706 [BL]. "Prospectus of the Florida Agriculturist", *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 3, 1874), p. 5.

[444] Appleby, *Capitalism and a New Social Order*, pp. ix-x.

their agricultural communities into the future.[445] As a grower in the *Southern California Horticulturist* wrote, "Southern California represents an industry of a character peculiarly its own. Only one other State in the Union – Florida (and perhaps another on a small scale – Louisiana) – is engaged to any extent in the cultivation of semi-tropical fruits."[446] This distinctiveness posed its own problems: as Fred Shannon has written, nineteenth-century settlers "often sought a region topographically and climatically similar to that from which they came".[447] California and Florida boosters faced mirrored challenges in attracting sceptical residents from distant climes. Yet the distinctiveness was also critical, proof of the unmatched potentialities of the semi-tropics. As a Florida railroad agent wrote, "Agriculture is immensely profitable in Florida because Nature has established for her farmers a certain monopoly."[448]

In semi-tropical California and Florida, agriculturists would thus progress materially while staying outside of the corruptions and class divisions of industrial cities. For J. De Barth Shorb, president of Southern California's Horticultural Society, prosperous agriculture sustained republican health. "Where wages are derived principally from the soil,

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[445] Thus growers in both states obsessed over the potential "over-production" of semi-tropical fruits – as a phenomenon which would reduce their market niche and agricultural exceptionalism – while raising "demand" by advertising citrus throughout the North and Midwest as diet essentials rather than luxury items: see Douglas C. Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[446] "State Aid", *Southern California Horticulturist*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (November 1877), p. 100 [BL].

[447] Fred Shannon, *The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961), pp. 3-25.

[448] John P. Varnum [Passenger Department of the Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railway], *Florida, Its Climate, Productions and Characteristics* (New York: South Pub. Company, 1885), p. 46 [UF].

and more especially from the farm owned by the man who has made the wages, you can consider that country safe – free from communism, free of internal revolution, and in but little danger of foreign invasion."[449] With a market monopoly, agriculture – and a healthy version of it – would be king in California and Florida, making them separate from and better than more industrial regions of America. Republicanism and prosperity would define the agricultural communities of the semi-tropical states, which, as America had once done, promised to shed the dead skin of older societies. As the *Los Angeles Times* declared, "Florida is not as other countries. There is no land on the face of the earth, unless it be Southern California, which enjoys the same advantages – the same immunity from heat and cold" and "the same resources of agricultural production" – qualities which made the states "unique…distinct and superior to all other sections of the universe."[450]

Semi-Tropical California for Settlers

California's semi-tropical agriculture was promoted in dialogue with social and physical transformation of the region – especially, the shift to diversified horticulture which expanded with irrigation and improved marketing from the 1870s. Historians highlight rigid capitalist policies, including the employment of migratory, often non-white, workers, which cohered to deal with the intensive harvests of these "specialised" crops, and saw the emergence of an "industrial" agricultural landscape.[451] Kevin Starr and David Vaught, by

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[449] Shorb, "Horticultural Fair", pp. 166-67.

[450] Itinerant, "In the Semi-Tropics", p. 4.

[451] Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* [1935] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Steven Stoll, *The Fruits of Natural Advantage: Making the Industrial Countryside in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Richard Walker, *The*

contrast, argue that a distinctly agrarian-republican self-imagery infused California growers, for whom horticulture was separate from sordid Eastern "manufacturing".[452] These conflicting interpretations of California's agricultural development remain in debate and, to be sure, the state's size and diversity manifested in myriad forms of agricultural production. Using the region's boosterism as lens, however, the contrasting readings can be seen in a different light – more integrated within promotional imagery which combined republican and colonialist strains. Boosters sold semi-tropical California as a renewing opportunity for American agriculture; yet they also equated renewal with Anglo-dominated development, thus accepting and fostering racial subjugation as part of this "progressive" agriculture.

The visions of semi-tropical agriculture emerged in the depressed 1870s. Agriculture, ironically, was at the root of the state's socioeconomic malaise. California had moved on from the vagaries of gold mining – as one promoter wrote, "the *prosperous* business…is not now, as formerly, mining, but agriculture" – but precisely what kind of agriculture that would be remained uncertain.[453] As settlers discovered, California boasted an unparalleled agricultural diversity, of which wheat became a leading crop.[454] Through

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Conquest of Bread: 150 Years of Agribusiness in California (New York: New Press, 2004); for California farm labourers, see Richard Steven Street, *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farm Workers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[452] Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). Vaught, *Cultivating California*.

[453] I. N. Hoag [California Immigration Commission], *California, The Cornucopia of the World: Room for Millions of Immigrants* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1883), p. 45 [BL].

[454] See Wright, *The Conquest of Bread*.

the state's central valley, grain developed into a profitable "bonanza" staple, with California's annual production six-fold the combined total of Oregon and Washington.[455] Yet California wheat was characterised by large, absentee-owned, mechanised farms which employed crowds of "tramp" labourers on low wages. Wheat's agricultural realities were decidedly at odds with the agrarian hopes of most boosters, who saw in fruits and vines superior socioeconomic benefits.[456] For railroad agents like William H. Mills, fruit culture promised higher land values and shipping freights since fruits could be harvested and transported more frequently than wheat. Furthermore, as Mills wrote, "horticulture, prosecuted under the unrivalled advantages which attend it here, leaves us without a competitor. Upon this substantial and enduring basis, the entire industrial structure [of the region] will eventually rise."[457] This "industrial structure" would be defined by small farms – the very antithesis of California wheat, which even Charles Nordhoff had disdained as "not a pleasant system of agriculture, nor one which can be permanent".[458]

The wheat industry also appalled journalist Henry George who, in San Francisco, penned a series of works attacking land monopoly and wealth division as the perverse consequences of capitalist "progress".[459] For a vast state, California, he saw, had few government lands left and displayed worrying signs of age. Thus, in his 1879 polemic

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[455] Andrew F. Rolle, *California – A History* (New York: Thomas Crowell Co., 1969), p. 355.

[456] Mills, "Marketing California Fruits", pp. 703-707.

[457] Ibid, p. 707; Sackman, *Orange Empire*, pp. 37-53; Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, p. 52.

[458] Charles Nordhoff, *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence: A Book for Travellers and Settlers* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1873), pp. 182-189.

[459] For more on Henry George, see John L. Thomas, *Alternative America: Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Henry Demarest Lloyd and the Adversary Tradition* (New York: Belknap, 1983).

Progress and Poverty, he charged, "So long as all the increased wealth which modern progress brings goes but to build up great fortunes, to increase luxury and make sharper the contrast between the House of Have and the House of Want, progress is not real and cannot be permanent. The reaction must come."[460] So it did in San Francisco, after a railroad wage-cut inspired radicalism led by Dennis Kearney and a newly-formed Workingmen's Party – local signs of the nationwide hardening of class divisions.

Intense anti-Chinese agitation by Kearney-inspired whites further undermined California's ability to attract settlers. According to B. B. Redding, a railroad promotional agent, the publicity given to the "Chinese Question" meant "the people of our own race in other States and counties are led to believe that the small farmer and farm-labourer cannot succeed in this State."[461] Spurred by California politicians, however, both major political parties pursued exclusion in their national platforms, culminating in Congress voting for Chinese exclusion in 1882, which "for ten years formally barred Chinese nationals from entering the United States, denying them citizenship as well".[462] Well-received by whites on the West Coast (and renewed in 1892), the exclusion act served as political scaffolding for booster visions of California as a coming land for white farmers, in which semi-tropical fruits, rather than wheat, would be the core industry.

Southern California, in particular, promised an alternative to wheat: a better kind of progress which was characterised by agrarian prosperity and republican stability. Their

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[460] Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (New York: Modern Library, 1879), p. 10.

[461] B. B. Redding, "Immigration and How to Promote it", *Californian*, Vol. 5, No. 25 (January 1882), p. 53 [BL].

[462] Eric T. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 11.

conservatism and vested interests meant land boosters shied away from the land tax proposals of George and loathed the activism of Kearney; as one Easterner wrote to a Los Angeles magazine, "One thing you must do, if you would encourage Eastern emigration, and that is, get rid of Kearney and Kearneyism; not by violence, but by the expression of an overwhelming public opinion."[463] But California boosters shared in fears of land monopoly and social disintegration, and strived for small-farming settlement as the basis for a healthy civilisation. Fruit-growing on twenty-to-forty acre tracts combined their utopian and capitalist impulses. Prosperity was allied to social cohesion. The booster-journalist Charles Shinn thus expressed the Californian hope that "our era of wheat growing and large farms is to change into an era of diversified interests and small, healthy farms, worked by their owners."[464]

But Southern California had previously been considered by Anglos a "barren, sandy, and desert waste" – exotic and agriculturally poor – in part because Mexican land-owners tended to be ranchers on large tracts.[465] This culture fed into Anglo notions of Latin improvidence. "The land was looked upon as only fit for grazing," Widney wrote, while "the *old residents*…gravely argue[d] that agriculture could not be made to pay."[466] The post-conquest influx of white Americans placed increasing pressure on the "old residents," who were forced into expensive litigation to prove ownership of lands they held under

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[463] C. A. H., "Mistake of His Life", *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (April 1880), p. 67.

[464] Charles H. Shinn, "Peculiar Drawbacks of California Farming", *Southern California Horticulturist*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (March 1878), p. 185 [BL].

[465] Harry Ellington Brook, *The Land of Sunshine: Southern California* (Los Angeles: Southern California Bureau of Information, 1893), pp. 7-8 [BrL].

[466] Lindley & Widney, *California of the South*, p. 46.

Mexican laws.[467] The Californios' precarious status was further weakened by devastating droughts from 1862 to 1864 which killed off cattle, accelerating the dispossession of their holdings.[468] Anglo-Americans depicted a spendthrift Latin gentry who had been incapable of bringing forth the region's fertility. A souvenir guidebook narrated "the transition from the native Californian to the Anglo-Saxon element," which saw "the new stir of life and activity infused into hitherto torpid and dormant arteries."[469] The native descendants were still "dormant". The Mexican, boosters informed, "is not very fond of work, but when it is absolutely necessary to buy candles and pay the musicians for a dance, or buy whiskey, you can rely on his for working as long as the necessity lasts." Compared with energetic Anglos, "slowness" was "one of the marvels" of "Mexican work".[470]

Thus casting Spaniards and Mexican peoples as failures in free labour terms, land promoters also emphasised agricultural evolution as the "manifest destiny" of a state now under Anglo-American control. "The old Californians knew but little of the comforts and pleasures of civilised life and cared less," stated the *Pacific Rural Press* in 1886. "But by-and-by came a different people – an industrious, thrifty, civilised people," who arrived from the east to "plant oranges and lemons and vines and…build up new and pleasanter homes in this new Italy, of the Pacific slope." The displacement of the Mexican cattle economy by

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[467] Tomas Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 65-74.

[468] Leonard Pitt, *Decline of the Californios* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

[469] Edward Vischer, *Vischer's Pictorial of California* (San Francisco: Joseph Winterbur & Company, 1870), np [UCLA].

[470] William M. Thayer, *Marvels of the New West* (Norwich: The Henry Bill Publishing Company, 1890), p. 213 [UCSD].

Anglo agriculturists was the advent of "modern civilisation, with its system of land sales, mortgages, etc., [which] captured both land and cattle, and opened up the country to a new life and a new industry."[471] For promoters, this "new life" was supported by irrigation, which not only converted "desert wastes" into fruitful gardens but assumed profound social consequences in the breakup of large Mexican land grants. By virtue of its expense, irrigation would lead to the subdivision of holdings into smaller tracts, thereby producing "the very reverse of monopoly in the land".[472] The result would be middle-class communities of landowners, virtuous because independent, prosperous, and close to nature. "It is irrigation, if anything," T. W. Haskins wrote, "that will overcome the growing tendency of people in this country to leave the country and crowd into already congested cities."[473]

Railroad expansion and colony settlement in Southern California similarly underwrote the booster visions of semi-tropical agriculture. An 1870 land company prospectus declared, "For the growth of all the semi-tropical, and some of the tropical fruits, there is no country in the world better fitted than the valleys and foothills of the southern portion of this State," but this "portion…has been hitherto comparatively neglected."[474] Concerns over the remoteness and liveability of Southern California explained this "neglect". The completion of a Southern Pacific link from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1876, however, sparked new developments in the city's hinterland. Local

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[471] "Los Angeles County", *Pacific Rural Press* (March 29, 1886), p. 85 [CSL Scrapbooks].

[472] *Semi-Tropic California – San Diego County* (San Francisco: Pacific Coast Land Bureau, 1891), p. 14 [UCSD].

[473] T. W. Haskins, "Irrigation as a Civilising Agent", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 1894), p. 40.

[474] *Prospectus of the San Pascual Plantation* (San Francisco: Cubery & Co., 1870), np [CSL].

businessmen formed a chamber of commerce and commissioned a pamphlet on the county. A. T. Hawley's text charted rising land values and the railroad's positive impact in enabling growers to dispatch crops to market.[475] Aware of Eastern scepticism about the region, Hawley located Southern California's potential within the free labour ideology. "For myself, I believe that no section of the country offers greater inducements to the industrious, capable seeker after a home, than Los Angeles County."[476] Industry would be especially rewarded due to the natural conditions, including "a soil and climate unsurpassed for the production of Semi-tropical and ordinary fruits," a "capacity for production…almost unlimited," and an "area of rich productive soil, awaiting the labour and energy of thousands of families," which "astonishes the tourist and settler".[477]

Meanwhile, colony groups of Eastern or Midwestern families who banded together to purchase land, upon which they each owned a small farm, raised Southern California's agricultural profile. After a severe winter in 1872, a group of Indiana families resolved to "organise a cooperative movement" and migrate to a milder climate, either Southern California or Florida.[478] Their choice reflected assumptions that Southern California offered fertile soils without "tropical" threats of disease or enervation. "Some one of the group had received a letter from a visitor to Southern California," which "told of the warm, genial sunshine, of the trade winds sighing through the orange groves…and of the immunity from

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[475] A.T. Hawley, *The Present Condition, Growth, Progress, and Advantages, of Los Angeles City and County, Southern California* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1876), pp. 3-54 [UCLA].

[476] Ibid, p. 3.

[477] Ibid, p. 54.

[478] *A Thumb Nail History of Pasadena* (Pasadena: Pasadena Transfer and Storage Company, n.d.), np [BL].

malaria, yellow fever and other epidemics."[479] The Indianans founded the town of Pasadena, which, along with other colonies like Anaheim, became symbols of Southern California's agricultural potential. Semi-tropical fecundity and specialty crops, boosters asserted, made profitable the "colony system," which the Southern Pacific described as "one of the most beneficent of all modern contributions to the comfort, prosperity, and happiness of the human family."[480] Colony settlement suited the company's land policy, which, as Land Agent Jerome Madden wrote in 1890, "has always been, and is now, to encourage the settlement of its land in small tracts, by persons who will live on and cultivate them".[481] Colonies were said to marry rural independence with social benefits, such that "the discomforts of ordinary frontier-life are avoided."[482]

Describing a domesticated version of "frontier-life," Southern California promoters also tapped into the American faith in the West as "the spatial site for revitalising national energies".[483] Westward expansionism provided latent source material for boosters, like former mayor of Los Angeles E. F. Spence, who wrote in the *Californian*, "The course of the Star of Empire, civilisation and population, has long been toward the West; but here on the bosom of the broad Pacific that star fades away and here upon its shores the typical pioneer, the explorer, the scientist and the progressive American must stop because they

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[479] *Crown of the Valley – The Story of Pasadena* (Pasadena: Publicity Department, Pasadena & Maryland Branches, Security Trust & Savings Bank, 1924), p. 16 [BL].

[480] *California – Self-Supporting Homes!* (San Francisco: Southern Pacific Company, 1889), p. 8 [CSL]. "Colonies in Southern California", *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 9 (September 1880), p. 129.

[481] Madden, *California – Its Attractions*, p. 7.

[482] Lindley & Widney, *California of the South*, p. 46.

[483] Trachtenberg, *Incorporation of America*, p. 17.

can go no further."[484] The California Immigrant Union's William Martin described small farming as the "natural" Western system. Easterners "seeking small farms, where they may enter into the cultivation of semi-tropical fruits," were informed that "the great success of the Western States in rapid improvement and large labouring citizenship lies in the fact that they could offer to the emigrant small farms," upon which "a man of small means could…get a good start towards independence and wealth."[485] Independence was particularly attainable in Southern California because of its rare agricultural prospects. An 1876 pamphlet declared, "Of all the industries in Southern California, fruit culture is the most prominent," as its "semi-tropical fruits have the world for a market"; "less laborious" than cereal farming, it also promised better prospects "for a man who has neither a profession nor a lucrative trade, nor much capital, to become independent."[486] A respected booster, Martin was later employed by Florida land companies and, in California again, by the San Diego County Immigration Association, as he made a successful career from promoting semi-tropical agriculture.

Colonies became active proponents of semi-tropical agriculture. Founded in 1871 by Midwesterners, Riverside was "extensively advertised throughout the United States" by the Riverside Land and Irrigation Company, organised in 1875 by land-owners with "the desire…that an intelligent and prosperous community shall be established upon their territory."[487] The company targeted "northern and eastern people" in pamphlets describing

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[484] E. F. Spence, "Los Angeles", *Californian*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 1891), p. 1.

[485] Martin, *Supplement to All About California*, p. 7.

[486] *Santa Barbara Index* reproduced in Martin, *Supplement to All About California*, p. 14.

[487] Riverside Land and Irrigation Company, *Southern California* (San Francisco: Bacon and Company, 1879), pp. 7-28 [CSL].

Riverside's railroad links (the Southern Pacific's Colton station seven miles away), "delightful, bracing atmosphere," and impressive orange and lemon crops: 200,000 trees by 1879. Contrary to other warm areas in America stalked by disease – "diphtheria, chills and fever" in "the upper Mississippi Valley" and "that terrible scourge, Yellow Fever" reaching "even the orange-producing districts of Florida" – Riverside displayed "perfect immunity" and a low death rate. Southern California, moreover, possessed a year-round climate in which whites need fear no climatic laziness. "At no time…was the heat so oppressive as to interrupt outdoor labour, or labour of any kind." On a small tract, a settler could live outdoors and grow fruits as part of a "young and prosperous community".[488] The land company elsewhere advertised its "15,000 acres of the most desirable land in Southern California for semi-tropical fruit-growing and beautiful and healthful homes," with "no lands…sold but to actual settlers."[489]

The republican imagery of Riverside, however, was inseparable from colonialist assertions that white settlers could attain cheap non-white labour. Fruits were picked in intensive harvests, such that even on a small farm hired help was useful, if not vital.[490] White field-workers were preferred but they were also scarce in California, more expensive, and keen to move on. The Riverside Land and Irrigation Company thus explained how "Indian labour of a reliable character can be obtained as farm hands at 75c per day and board" – less than half what white field hands were paid.[491] The

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[488] Riverside Land and Irrigation Company, *Southern California*, pp. 27-30.

[489] Advertisement by the Riverside Land and Irrigation Company in *Southern California Horticulturist*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September 1877), p. 31 [BL].

[490] For a discussion of horticultural harvesting, see Vaught, *Cultivating California*, pp. 68-94.

[491] Riverside Land and Irrigation Company, *Southern California*, p. 15.

"independence" (or lack thereof) of these Native Americans was not discussed. Instead California boosters accommodated within their republican visions ethnic and racial minorities who filled manual roles. In his 1886 guidebook, Theodore Van Dyke stated that, contrary to Eastern concerns, "the Chinese and the Indians are not… any drawback." While inferior to whites, the Chinese were useful labourers and, as a minority prevented from further arrivals, acceptable in that capacity. "[T]he Chinaman is no meaner than [the white man], and is much cheaper. But no one considers a Chinaman half a substitute for a reliable white man."[492]

If racial heterogeneity was shown to have partial benefits for regional development, promoters cast semi-tropical agriculture as the product of environment and Anglo-American ideals. Editor of the *California Horticulturist* and a prodigious promoter, Charles H. Shinn thus depicted semi-tropical agriculture in an 1881 magazine article as a new "Anglo-Saxon" venture. From his base in San Francisco, Shinn admired the southern counties which were becoming better known through promotional pamphlets and citrus fairs held in Riverside and Los Angeles, which demonstrated that "the irrepressible American has entered a new field – that of intensive horticulture, in a semi-tropic land."[493] Its incipient population made Southern California superior to more southern lands which produced similar products. "The time may come when the table-lands of Mexico and Central America will be rivals in certain fruits," Shinn wrote, although "coffee and other plants not successful" in California were best adapted to those lands. More importantly, "there is less danger from that direction than people imagine. Orange groves are not planted

[492] Van Dyke, *Southern California*, pp. 213, 227.

[493] Charles Shinn, "Southern California", *Californian*, Vol. 3, No. 17 (May 1881), p. 447.

in a day, nor will New England colonies choose waste wildernesses under a foreign flag when they can live in Southern California on the border of two climatic zones," where "apples and lemons, [and] pines and palms" grew side-by-side. Indeed "soil, climate, and location combine to make the semi-tropic fruit centre of the world in Southern California."[494]

For agricultural promoters of "semi-tropic" California, the line which separated a "waste wilderness" (such as Mexico) from a "coming…land of almost ideal homes" (Southern California) was not only the state's southern border. It was also the constituencies who would control these lands. Shinn thus hailed "the beauty and strength of [California's] tropic south-land" but, instead of a tropical "waste wilderness," saw a suitable location for "New England colonies". In referring to New England, Shinn suggested that one of the birthplaces of American republicanism could be relocated to an environment which, in other, "natural" respects, "bordered" the tropics. Republican society would thus be imported, producing a "semi-tropical" expansion of American traditions which were coming under threat in the industrial Northeast. "Let us hope," Shinn concluded, "that in Southern California there will be no million-peopled metropolis, crime-laden, terror-haunted by spectres of infamy, and shaken by thousand-spindled machineries." His dark vision of modern industry contrasted with the sunny agricultural future of the "Saxons" of Southern California who needed only to "develop their distinctive industries as to virtually control the world's markets". Semi-tropical California thus represented a republican alternative to the "terror-haunted" Northeast:

[494] Shinn, "Southern California", p. 447.

> Whole communities of men shall rest, each one under his own orange tree, and blessed in his own garden. Thus, in our own way, we are solving a problem which has perplexed the world. We are shaping a reply to warrior, and social reformer, and nihilist.[495]

California's fruit culture was still a fledgling industry, however, presenting challenges in growing and marketing crops. In 1877 growers shipped the first carload of citrus eastward but the state's separation from major markets was an acute problem. "Distance from market must always fetter more or less the fruit industry of the Pacific slope," blithely (and wrongly) claimed a Florida promoter.[496] Techniques for growing citrus also remained experimental, with settlers thoroughly unaccustomed to the region's soils and climate. Growers formed the Southern California Horticultural Society in 1877 and published journals to improve their prospects as horticultural pioneers. As the secretary of the Southern California Immigration Association wrote, "Farming has to be learned over again in Southern California," a region "certainly quite unlike the eastern part of the United States in almost everything that can be mentioned" – which, of course, was part of its appeal.[497]

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[495] Shinn, "Southern California", p. 447.

[496] Letter by Jac. Humphries in *The Gulf Coast of Florida* (Chicago: Gulf Coast Land Company, 1885), pp. 48-51 [UF].

[497] *Southern California – Pomona Illustrated and Described* (Pomona: Pomona Land and Water Company, 1885), p. 40 [BrL].

Florida was the notable exception. In the 1870s Florida was widely considered the superior of the two states for the production of citrus fruits.[498] Southern California growers looked to their Florida counterparts for guidance and expertise, corresponding as producers who recognised, as one put it, "the similarity, in many respects and productions of California and Florida".[499] California's *Rural Press* was subscribed in Florida just as the *Florida Dispatch* and *Agriculturist* were read on the West Coast. When Floridians proposed for Washington, D. C., a "national convention of Semi-Tropical Fruit-Growers" – a "move [which] directly interests Florida, Louisiana and Southern California" – Californians responded positively, declaring that "as the Florida Fruit-Growers Association is probably the oldest organisation of the kind within the three States it should take the initiative in calling the Convention."[500] Through advertising, growers in both states worked to increase Northern demand for fruits which had been considered luxuries, while pooling cultivation techniques.[501] Thomas Garey's treatise, *Orange Culture in California*, was thus recommended in Florida to those "progressive orange-growers...who desire to become familiar with the advanced ideas and the best practice of our California neighbours."[502]

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[498] Van Dyke, *Southern California*, p. 195.

[499] "Proceedings of the Southern California Horticultural Society", *Southern California Horticulturist*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September 1877), pp. 3-16. "California Fruit-Growing", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 7 (May 8, 1882), p. 108. See also "Horticulture", *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (April 1881), p. 69.

[500] "National Convention of Semi-Tropical Fruit-Growers", *Southern California Horticulturist*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September 1877), p. 27.

[501] The California State Board of Trade thus printed material on the "four citrus belts of the Northern hemisphere": Italy, "Semi-Tropic Florida", Southern California, and the Sacramento Valley: Chipman, *Report Upon the Fruit Industry of California*, p. 3.

[502] "New Publication", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April 10, 1882), p. 5.

The distant states were "neighbours" because both were "semi-tropical" – a term which was institutionalised in the agricultural boosterism. Southern California's leading promotional journal from 1880 to 1883 was *Semi-Tropic California*, a monthly financed by advertising and local banks, and published as an "emigration paper" by the Horticultural Society.[503] Edited by horticulturist Nathan C. Carter and former Kansas immigration agent George Rice, the journal expressed concerns that immigration to the West Coast continued to go predominantly to Northern California, Oregon, and Washington Territory, and "devoted [itself] to the development of Southern California" through agriculture.[504] The region's scant population was put down to legacies of Mexican land-holding and ranching which were being overcome through irrigation and subdivision.[505] After six months of publication, 40,000 issues of *Semi-Tropic California* were disseminated east of the Rockies, and the publishers reported receipt of "nearly one thousand letters and postals" from readers who desired to know more about the region.[506]

In its pages, Southern California was represented as a "Semi-Tropic Land" which "brought together in magnificent profusion the most perfect specimens of…the temperate zones, with equally as perfect ones of the semi-tropic and tropic."[507] This natural bounty furnished republican settlement in the form of "hundreds of thousands of opportunities, where a man with a family and little or no means, by persistent attention to his own business, by care and economy in executing his plans…can acquire a comfortable home in

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[503] *Semi-Tropic California* (January 1883).

[504] William Olden, "Good Times", *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (February 1880), p. 11.

[505] *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1880), p. 2.

[506] *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (June 1880), p. 82.

[507] Shorb, "Horticultural Fair", pp. 166-67.

a few years."[508] Carter and Rice advertised their own lands, too, including a tract named the "Semi-Tropic California colony," evoking a typical combination of capitalist and agrarian impulses. "Several thousand acres of good land," for grapes, oranges, and other fruits, where "homes of peace and plenty can be made to those who will bring at least $1,000 in money and strong arms and willing hearts to *work* and wait," as the orchards came to fruition.[509]

The journal also reported the visit in 1880 of President Rutherford B. Hayes to Los Angeles. The first presidential trip to the Pacific Coast was a major boon for Southern California, coming as the nation emerged from the depression of the 1870s and publicising direct railroad links with the East which, nearly completed, heralded an end to the region's remoteness – what Benjamin Truman described as California's "now relative nearness to the 'States'".[510] The president affirmed the agricultural potential of Southern California and echoed booster claims that the region only needed further settlement.[511] "We have the best soil and the best climate in the world," William Olden wrote, "but population is requisite to utilise them."[512] Settlers were promised an escape from divisive Eastern trends towards urban crowding. The *Pacific Rural Press* quoted H. M. La Rue, president of the 1879 state

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[508] *Southern California Advocate* reproduced in *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (January 1880), p. 5.

[509] *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 7 (July 1880), p. 83.

[510] John E. Baur, "A President Visits Los Angeles: Rutherford B. Hayes' Tour of 1880", *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 38 (March 1955), pp. 33-46. *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 2, No. 11 (November 1880), p. 163. Truman, *Homes and Happiness*, p. 11.

[511] Richard J. Orsi, "Selling the Golden State: A Study of Boosterism in Nineteenth Century California", (Unpublished PhD. Diss., University of Wisconsin, 1973), p. 486.

[512] Olden, "Good Times", p. 11.

fair, who warned that "the rural spirit of our country is dying out" as "the better social advantages of the cities" attracted "an undue proportion of our population…, to the injury of agricultural pursuits" – a portentous development for a nation weaned on agricultural virtue. "Let us remember," the orator explained, "that the ultimate object for which we toil and strive is to build up an enduring civilisation." California's semi-tropical potential made possible an "enduring" agricultural civilisation. The "genial climate" and "natural beauty of our scenery, where…every fruit [will] ripen" meant there "the occupation of farming will ever be attractive and ennobling."[513]

The redemptive qualities of semi-tropical agriculture were reiterated by the California Immigration Commission, a Chicago-based organisation heavily-financed by the Southern Pacific Railroad which focused on the Midwest. In the shape of a bursting horn of plenty, semi-tropicality adorned the cover of its 1883 guidebook, *California, The Cornucopia of the World*, written by the commission's officer, Isaac N. Hoag:

[513] H. M. La Rue [President, California State Fair], "The Progress of California", *Pacific Rural Press*, Vol. 18, No. 12 (September 20, 1879), p. 180 [BL].

Fig. 3.1 – *California, The Cornucopia of the World* Cover (1883) [BL][514]

Marketing railroad lands from $2.50 to $20 per acre and pricier private lands, Hoag stressed the agricultural benefits of a semi-tropical land. "To the farmer, California's climate is at once health and wealth, security and certainty…All animal and vegetable life and growth is strong and healthful and vigorous under its peculiarly benign, resuscitating and perfecting influence."[515] Compared to the arduous slog of Midwestern farming, where "tornadoes, cyclones, thunder and lightning" or "scalding hot, sunstroke days in summer" "destroy crops or delay work in the field," Southern California meant pleasurable, prosperous

[514] Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World*, pp. 23-4.

[515] Ibid, p. 7.

agriculture. Hoag contrasted California with Illinois, claiming that if the states somehow swapped climates, Illinois land would be immensely more valuable, obtaining "a monopoly of the semi-tropical fruit products of the United States"[516] Instead, California did and citrus cultivation was spreading within the state, such that "we have now a 'Semi-Tropical California' extending from San Diego to within one hundred miles of the line of Oregon".[517]

This growth of "Semi-Tropical California" in the 1880s reflected the new railroads as well as expanded promotional techniques, including exposition displays. The Southern Pacific and Santa Fe Railroads followed by the invention of refrigerated cars facilitated the shipping of semi-tropical crops to Eastern markets.[518] Under the vice-presidency of William H. Mills, the California State Board of Trade explained the significance of these changes. "As methods of handling improve and rates of freight cheapen, fruit can be sent in larger quantities and be sold cheaper, and still leave a good profit."[519] With railroad competition the cost of fruit shipments fell from $3.38 per pound in 1871 to $1.37 per pound in 1888. More easily marketed, fruit promised a prosperous, small-farming society, as wine and fruits yielded $104 per acre compared to $19 per acre for grains.[520] "In California you could hardly say that the average wheat farm was less than 640 acres," the Board of Trade stated,

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[516] Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World*, p. 28. Florida promoters made similar comparisons with Midwestern states: see Dennis Eagen, "Sixth Annual Report of the Commissioner of Lands and Immigration," in Eagen, *The Florida Settler, or Immigrants' Guide* (Tallahassee: C. H. Walton, 1874), pp. 5-6 [UF].

[517] Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World*, p. 19.

[518] Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, pp. 130-165.

[519] Chipman, *Report Upon the Fruit Industry of California*, p. 24.

[520] Ibid, p. 24.

but "the farm unit in fruit culture under irrigation is not more than twenty acres…In other words, it means…that thirty-two families shall occupy the land that one occupied before."[521]

The railroads advertised Southern California in this manner at expositions in the North, Midwest, and South, which were attended by thousands of visitors. At the 1885 World's Fair in New Orleans, California beat Florida to the gold medal for the best display of citrus fruits – an award which commentators deemed "a magnificent advertisement for the State".[522] A West Coast booster wrote, "Our most formidable competitor was Florida, which had the advantage of nearness to the place of exhibition, and made great efforts to carry off the prize," yet lost out.[523] In 1889 promoters initiated "California on Wheels" – a train which carried the state's fruits on "a tour of two seasons [and] visited all the leading cities and most of the smaller towns in the northern part of the United States," attended by 1.5 million people.[524] Exhibitions trains, organisers noted, were "not a new plan": the Canadian Pacific and the Northern Pacific railroads were doing similar as was the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad which "had a car sent out from Florida" which "was

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[521] *California Handbook with State and County Maps* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1892), p. 113 [CSL].

[522] "California Triumphant at the World's Fair at New Orleans," Associated Press article reproduced in Hoag, *California, Cornucopia of the World* [1885 edition] (Chicago: California Immigration Commission, 1885), p. 80 [BL].

[523] Ibid, p. 80.

[524] *New Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1891), p. 20 [CSL].

meeting with grand results".[525] But California on Wheels, with its oranges and vines, conveyed a specific promotional message. As Los Angeles booster C. A. Warner stated, the Easterner viewing the displays "will realise the fact that he can come out here on a farm of ten acres, and can farm with great deal better results than he could farm on 160 acres East."[526] Fruit exhibits thus supported booster assertions that "a semi-tropical climate with plenty of water for the soil, gives land a greater value for agriculture than all the rains that a temperate climate can possibly afford. Such a climate has California. Such supply of water has California, and these circumstances are rendering her truly the farmer's country."[527]

The semi-tropical imagery was pervasive in Southern California's agricultural boosterism and must have contributed to bringing settlers to the region. In a change from earlier decades, migrants moved to the "southland" in greater numbers than to the northern parts of the state. Reduced railroad prices in the 1880s enticed thousands of Americans to Southern California, which, over the decade, increased by 136,981 (while the Sacramento Valley grew by 11,779).[528] From constituting 7.5% of the state population in 1880, the six counties of Southern California made up nearly 17% of the total in 1890 – a figure that

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[525] Statement made by C. A. Warner, of Warner Bros., Los Angeles, in regard to sending exhibit cars throughout the Eastern States, for the purpose of advertising Southern California (Aug. 14, 1888) [Charles Turrill Papers, CHS].

[526] Ibid.

[527] Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World*, p. 27.

[528] Southern California was here defined as the six counties of San Diego, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Santa Barbara: *Report of the Immigration Committee of the California State Board of Trade* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1895), p. 4 [CSL].

would continue to rise.[529] Semi-tropical agriculture was vital to this settlement. As J. P. Irish of the State Board of Trade's Immigration Committee wrote in 1895, "The counties which show the most advancement in wealth [and population] are those in which the principal product is fruit."[530] Thus it was to Southern California – which shipped 3,000 car-loads of oranges across the Rocky Mountains in 1887 – that Florida developer A. N. Cole looked, calling for railroad fares to Florida to be reduced so that "California and other distant lands far less by nature favoured, will cease to command" the lion's share of settlers and tourists seeking a semi-tropical climate.[531]

Visions of republican settlement played a fundamental role in the emergence of semi-tropical California as a desirable agricultural domain. For many colonies, the prosperity was real. During the 1880s orange colonies, like Riverside, demonstrated dramatic rises in land values and Southern California developed a reputation as expensive. A. A. Ward, a settler from Ohio, wrote in 1888, "A majority of the people east labour under the mistaken idea that to come and live in California, they must have several thousand dollars at command." He charged this belief as "mistaken," however, since, in general, "the actual need, after landing, is but little, if any greater, than in most of the western states." Moreover, a consumer of the region's promotional narratives, he wrote that "with five or ten acres of land a man can make a living easier here than in any country, of which I have

[529] Brook, *Land of Sunshine*, p. 6.

[530] *Report of the Immigration Committee,* p. 4.

[531] A. N. Cole, "Irrigation – Sub-Irrigation – Mr. Cole's System Now Being Introduced at Lake Helen", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7, No. 12 (March 21, 1887), p. 258 [UF].

any knowledge, and if industrious can make money on ten acres, plenty of it."[532] Alongside the leisure visions of tourist promoters, the free labour ideology of rewarded industry was embedded in the selling of semi-tropical California, as land boosters successfully tied republican ideals to a new American environment. An 1888 pamphlet thus declared, "What Southern California needs above all other things at present, is a large influx of industrious and intelligent tillers of the soil" – settlers "whether possessed of much or little capital" who brought with them intrinsic American qualities "of brawn, energy, and persistent faith in the glorious possibilities of this sun-kissed land."[533]

Semi-Tropical Florida for Settlers

Like their counterparts in Southern California, Florida land boosters depicted prosperous semi-tropical agriculture and opportunities for independence for those "rich or poor, who come to our State with willing hands, a frugal mind, and an honest purpose."[534] Florida boosters also engaged with America's myth of the West as a means of attracting settlers. Recalling the traditional cry of "Go West, young man," Helen Harcourt thus declared in her 1889 guidebook that "Florida…with her sunny smile and warmth of welcome, [has] stepped forward into the light, offering far more than all the much-vaunted West could

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[532] Letter from Dr. A. A. Ward (Del Mar, San Diego County) to Mr. Holabird (Southern California Horticultural Society) (1888), np ["San Diego Chamber of Commerce Folder," Charles Turrill Papers, CHS].

[533] *Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California and Los Angeles City and County* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1888), p. 5 [UCLA].

[534] John MacDonald, *Plain Talk about Florida: For Homes and Investments, Part One* (Eustis: MacDonald, 1883), p. 3 [UF].

bestow."[535] Brazen as such claims were they distanced Florida from many, if never all, of the (negative) associations held about the staple-crop South. For promoters, semi-tropical fruit culture represented a healthier agricultural basis, one which brought Florida "closer" to California. Florida was fused to the South, however, which made the visions of renewing agricultural labour a harder sell. As land surveyor and editor of the *Florida-New Yorker* John MacDonald wrote in 1883, "Few of our northern people" have "had any faith in either the people or the lands of the South," especially when "Westward, Ho! was the cry".[536]

Southern economic realities did not help either. After the Civil War, Florida was cash-poor even among the defeated Confederate states: the assessed value of its farmlands and buildings in 1870 was $8 million (California's was $141 million).[537] With capital scarce, the State Bureau of Immigration was forced to rely on private advertisements and county contributions for its annual guides to land prices, soil types and "social conditions".[538] Like California, Florida also suffered from land-holding controversies, some dating as far as back as the Spanish period. The Internal Improvement Fund, the body in charge of state lands, was also unable to provide grants to railroad developers due to a legal injunction over an unpaid debt which lasted until 1881.[539] Florida's existing railways were

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[535] Helen Harcourt, *Home Life in Florida* (Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1889), p. 56 [FAU].

[536] MacDonald, *Plain Talk about Florida*, p. 4.

[537] *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition: Vol. 4 – Economic Sectors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 59-60.

[538] J. S. Adams [State Commissioner of Lands and Immigration], *Florida: Its Climate, Soil and Productions* (New York: Fisher & Field, 1870), pp. 4-66 [FSU].

[539] Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), pp. 277-281.

thus "in a condition of financial chaos and physical decrepitude," with just over 400 miles of tracks state-wide – none of which penetrated into the peninsula.[540]

For Northerners, fallout from the Civil War cast a psychological shadow over the state too. "In our correspondence," immigration commissioner J. S. Adams wrote, "the question is often asked, 'Is it safe for a Northern man to come to Florida?'"[541] He, of course, answered that it was, but Yankee fears about Florida persisted, as Congressional Reconstruction instigated federal military rule in the former Confederacy. Embittered Southerners constructed a vision of rapacious "carpetbaggers" from the North coming to take advantage economically and politically of the prostrated region.[542] "There is nothing that has operated so disastrously to the cause of Southern immigration as the disorders that have grown out of the late war," immigration commissioner Dennis Eagen wrote in 1873 – although he was not alone in claiming that Florida had avoided the "anarchy and disorder which have convulsed many of the other Southern States".[543] In fact Reconstruction-era Florida was rife with political and racial violence which targeted African Americans and white Republicans.[544] Whatever their political leanings, Florida boosters in the 1870s thus

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[540] Nathan Mayo [Commissioner, Bureau of Immigration], *Florida, an Advancing State, 1907 – 1917 – 1927: An Industrial Survey* (Tallahassee: Florida Legislature, 1928), pp. 98-99. [FSU]

[541] Adams, *Florida*, p. 15. "We are frequently asked, 'Is it safe for northern people to settle in Florida, away from Jacksonville?'": T. B. Forbush, *Florida: The Advantages and Inducements Which It Offers to Immigrants* (Boston: New England Emigrant Aid Company, 1868), p. 19. [UNF]

[542] See Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 425-459.

[543] Eagen, *The Florida Settler*, p. 6.

[544] Paul Ortiz, *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organising and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 9-32.

faced considerable obstacles when it came to convincing whites to migrate there and labour on their own farms. How, Northerners queried, was one supposed to come and work and make one's fortune in a land where labour had been degraded by slavery, where Yankees could be brutally ill-received, and where the climate perhaps sapped energy and resolve?

Agriculture was both part of the problem and an apparent remedy. Wherein California the issue was wheat, Florida's was cotton. Adams gave the following dismal description of cotton in Florida: "The pre-eminence given this crop, and the prevalence of slave labour,…have all combined to crush out all diversity of occupations not directly tributary to and concerned in the raising of cotton…Whether or not cotton has been 'king', it has certainly been a social tyrant," which "prevented the formation of those small villages as centres of population," which "in the Northern States, [develop] the essential instruments and means of social progress."[545] Florida's cotton belt ran through the northern counties of Jackson, Leon, Madison, and Gadsden, where the majority of antebellum whites and blacks lived. For decades after the war, the area was associated with the "old regime" of staple-crop culture.[546] Peninsular Florida was different, however. Long viewed by planters with scepticism, as "a comparatively unoccupied waste of thin, sandy land," it proved suitable to rarer crops.[547] "In no State of the Union can so extensive a variety of valuable productions be successfully cultivated as in Florida," Adams wrote, clarifying that while "most of the crops grown in the temperate zone flourish in the northern portion of the State," virtually "all the Peninsula is adapted to the cultivation of semi-tropical fruits."[548] Echoing

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[545] Adams, *Florida*, p. 13.

[546] C. K. Munroe (ed.), *The Florida Annual – Impartial and Unsectional, 1885* (New York: 1885), p. 21 [UF].

[547] Ibid, p. 23.

[548] Adams, *Florida*, p. 42.

Californians, he thus proclaimed for Florida "a monopoly" in the "growth of tropical and semi-tropical Fruits," which "when fairly developed, will make her one of the richest and most important of the United States."[549]

Moves towards commercial semi-tropical agriculture began during Reconstruction. In 1870 Northern capitalist Henry Sanford founded Sanford in central Florida and advertised its citrus lands; although he struggled financially, he brought a colony of Swedes to the region and inspired later developers to enter the peninsula.[550] New settlers succeeded in growing citrus and sending small quantities by ship to the Northeast, and published a periodical, the *Florida New Yorker*, which promoted orange culture in the Big Apple.[551] In 1874 Jacksonville's *Florida Agriculturist* began as a journal "especially devoted to horticulture" – including "the cultivation of the grape, peach, orange, lemon, [and] citron" – educated settlers on growing techniques, and challenged Northerners who "sneer…at the sand and low lands of Florida".[552] The periodical asserted that Florida was coming into its own as a land of semi-tropical fruit growers – a valid point in the sense that these fruits had never before been grown with a view to market. The *Agriculturist* threw Florida's lot in with other supposedly "barren places [which] have, as soon as the products to which they were best adapted…been introduced …proved to be far more profitable than fields

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[549] Adams, *Florida*, p. 51.

[550] Joseph A. Fry, *Henry S. Sanford: Diplomacy and Business in Nineteenth-Century America* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1982), pp. 87-111.

[551] George Barbour, *Florida for Tourists, Invalids and Settlers* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1882), p. 47 [UF].

[552] S. D. Wilcox, "Prospectus of the Florida Agriculturist", *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 3, 1874), p. 5. "The Future of Florida", *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (January 3, 1874), p. 4 [UF].

apparently of superior fertility." Readers only had to consider America's "*manifest destiny*" which saw even "wild and uninviting" regions "become populous and remunerative to the labour bestowed upon" them once their value had been recognised.[553]

"Semi-Tropical" became the preferred term for Florida land boosters. From 1875 to 1878, the state's leading promotional journal was the *Semi-Tropical*, a Jacksonville-based monthly edited by the former state governor Harrison Reed. The journal, an advertisement explained, "intended to be a worthy exponent and representative of the intelligence and practical industry of the State, which, in climate, soil, resources, and advantages, presents unequalled and peculiar attractions…for immigration and settlement."[554] Florida's "peculiar attractions" were set in contrast with a North where honest agricultural effort – that mainstay of Jeffersonian America – had been stripped of its dignity and worth, as observed J. F. Bartholf, of Manatee County: "It is to be regretted that there is so much fastidiousness and aristocratic pride in this hundredth year of our republic…It is contrary to the principles of a republic to make distinction in the classes of its citizens. A man who labours with his muscles is as much entitled to respect as one who seeks existence by his mental powers alone."[555] By growing fruits and vegetables in Florida, "true manhood and statesmanship" could be "successfully cultivated" by settlers.[556] Semi-tropical products symbolised Florida's attractions. A writer called for a horticultural display at the

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[553] Emphasis in original: "The Future of Florida", *Florida Agriculturist*, p. 4.

[554] Advertisement for the *Semi-Tropical* in Jacques, *Florida as a Permanent Home*, np.

[555] J. F. Bartholf, "Dignity of Labor", *Semi-Tropical*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (October 1875), pp. 94-95 [UF].

[556] Ibid, pp. 94-95.

Philadelphia Centennial through which Florida could exhibit "the beauty of her semi-tropical verdure".[557]

The semi-tropical connection between Florida and California was increasingly acknowledged. On the West Coast, growers read and praised Reed's *Semi-Tropical* as a magazine "ably conducted"; the *Florida Dispatch*, meanwhile, reported – often approvingly – on California's agricultural development, especially citrus.[558] Like California, Florida organised a semi-tropical fruit display for the 1885 New Orleans World's Fair which, according the display commissioner, General Sebring, helped "to send 20,000 fresh settlers to the State".[559] Cheaper railroad rates to and from California inspired an 1887 convention of Florida boosters who called on their state's railroads to copy the policies that enabled "California [to] ship her products to any part of the country at a paying rate of freight" and "provide immigrant sleepers".[560] Again mimicking their California counterparts, boosters in 1889 sent out display trains of citrus fruits entitled "Florida on Wheels".[561]

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[557] "Florida and the Centennial", *Semi-Tropical*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (September 1875), pp. 63-64.

[558] "Florida Items", *Southern California Horticulturist*, Vol. 1, No. 11 (September 1878), p. 363. "New Publications – California Fruit Grower's Convention", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (April 3, 1882), p. 4. "Gathering Lemons" [article reprinted from the Riverside (California) Press], *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (April 3, 1882), p. 5. "California", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7, No. 22 (May 30, 1887), p. 464.

[559] "Southern Immigration", *New Orleans Times-Democrat* (September 1, 1885), p. 28. [Charles Turrill Papers, BL]

[560] "Floridiana – Immigration Meeting", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7, No. 32 (August 8, 1887), p. 666.

[561] "Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture", *Journal of the Florida House of Representatives, 1891-04-07 – 1891-06-05* (Tallahassee: Florida House of Representatives, 1891), p. 3 [UF]. For a comparison of the two states' display trains which praised California's over Florida's, see "California vs. Florida – The Exhibits

"Neighbourly" relations also turned sour as the states competed for settlers. Harrison Reed, for example, was in 1877 riled by the continuous "receipt of pamphlets, maps, and circulars setting forth the advantages of California, particularly the southern portion of it, for settlement and cultivation."[562] Responding specifically to a circular by the Riverside Land and Irrigation Company, Reed produced an article which purported to be "an examination and consideration of the comparative advantages of California and Florida for the profitable investment of labour and capital, and the pursuits of agriculture, horticulture, or any branch of industry".[563] His conclusions unsurprisingly fell firmly in Florida's favour. In sum Florida, while possessing somewhat inferior soils, was preferable to Southern California since the latter was arid – making access to irrigating water both vital and costly – and without the abundant forests which, in Florida, provided settlers with convenient timber. Florida lands, moreover, were cheaper and closer to the Northeastern markets. Thus Florida "can offer the industrious man of small means superior advantages for acquiring a home".[564]

Reed articulated two common charges within Floridian critiques of California: its remoteness and its expense. Floridians explained that "good orange lands in Florida have always sold at much lower prices than in California," and that their state was much closer

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on Wheels of the Two States Compared", *Semi-Tropic Florida*, reprinted in *Sacramento Daily Union* (May 11, 1889), p. 2.

[562] Harrison Reed, "California vs. Florida", *Semi-Tropical*, Vol. 3, No. 9 (September 1877), p. 513.

[563] Ibid, p. 513.

[564] Ibid, pp. 513-517.

to Northern markets (if not Chicago).[565] These were both accurate. In 1880, the value of the average Florida farm and buildings was $866 while, in California, it was $7,293; S. Powers, a settler who had lived in both states, wrote in 1887 how "land here costs only one-half to one-fifth of what it does in California."[566] Florida citrus fruits, meanwhile, were marketed in the Northeast earlier than California's, dispatched in winter while the latter was sent in March.[567] Such contrasts were the basis for a piece in an 1888 pamphlet by the Alachua County Immigration Association in which Reverend George Watson laid out "a few points of honest comparison between the two localities."[568] Watson misleadingly cast himself as less partisan than those "few persons in Florida [who] have made very ignorant and foolish statements about California," just as "land agents and newspapers in California have published the grossest slanders and falsehoods about Florida." His thirteen-point list of "comparisons" invariably praised Florida, for possessing more forests and fuel, milder nights, and "far superior" citrus fruits (although, in a rare admission, he gave California superiority for "grapes and nuts"). Furthermore, California was "far removed from the great markets of its products" while Florida was "within twenty-four hours' ride of the metropolis of the Western Hemisphere and the great cities". Southern California was also

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[565] Letter by J. F. Richmond printed as "Inducements to Settlers: Good Land to be Had Cheap", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7, No. 34 (August 22, 1887), p. 706.

[566] *Historical Statistics of the United States – Vol. 4 – Economic Sectors*, pp. 4-61, 4-63.

[567] "California vs. Florida Oranges", *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 7, No. 22 (May 30, 1887), p. 465.

[568] Rev. George D. Watson, "Florida and Southern California Compared" in J. W. Ashby, *Alachua, the Garden County of Florida – Its Resources and Advantages* (Gainesville: Alachua County Immigration Association, 1888), pp. 7-10 [UF]. Watson also contributed his views to the *Ocean Grove Record* of New Jersey in a letter reprinted in the *Los Angeles Times*: "California vs. Florida – What a Visitor Says of Los Angeles", *Los Angeles Times* (April 21, 1885), p. 2.

prohibitively expensive, a "land for the rich and luxurious classes," whereas "Florida, while it possesses unlimited capabilities for the use of wealth, is emphatically the land for the poor, and no laboring man in the State need go one month without owning a few acres sufficient for a home and orchard."[569] Florida boosters thus worked to undercut Southern California's republican self-imagery while selling their own state as the true opening for productive labour.

The barbs cut the other way, of course, and deeper. While Southern California was attacked as expensive and remote, Florida was still denounced as a land unfit for white labour. Dr. Frederick Lente, an advocate of Florida's climate, reported "certain unfounded ideas and prejudices [about Florida] which have become deeply-rooted in northern communities".[570] These imagined a supposedly swamp-like interior and stifling atmosphere. Northerners who had migrated to California played up these "prejudices". William Olden thus hailed "Semi-Tropical California" as a desirable homeland providing "the fruits and luxuries of both the tropics and temperate zones," but warned that, "In Florida the health-seeker can only remain in safety for a few months, and must then leave for the north, if he would avoid the sultry heats and malarious fevers of the summer – he cannot make a home, but only a temporary stopping place during the winter."[571] A yellow fever panic in Jacksonville in 1878, and other outbreaks, reinforced Yankee fears that Florida was nowhere to "make a home".[572] Even if one avoided illness, summer heats could

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[569] Watson, "Florida and Southern California Compared", pp. 7-10.

[570] Frederick D. Lente, *The Constituents of Climate, with Special Reference to the Climate of Florida* (Louisville: Richmond & Louisville Medical Journal Book, 1878), p. 1 [UF].

[571] William Olden, in *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 7 (July 1880), np.

[572] "Florida Items", *Southern California Horticulturist*, p. 363.

diminish year-round productivity. As Seth French, a Union soldier from Wisconsin who became a successful grower in Orange County as well as Florida's Commissioner of Immigration, wrote in 1879, "Most Northern people believe that our climate is oppressively warm in summer, and also imagine that white persons can not labour, either physically or mentally – or, at least, do not; that the Southron has but little industry or energy, and that the Northern immigrant soon loses his former addition and activity."[573]

Southern legacies of environment thus continued to trouble Florida boosters even after the "Compromise of 1877" was championed as a socio-political watershed. For all but the most ardently Republican of boosters – such as Macdonald who briefly left the state, upset that "a few ignorant demagogues amongst the Democrats threatened the total expulsion of Yankees if [they] should succeed" – Democrat George Drew's gubernatorial victory in 1876 represented a relief, if not a triumph: closure of the sectional antagonisms of Reconstruction under which "progress is impossible".[574] National attitudes supported this idea. An article in the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, reprinted in the Florida press, announced that across the South "all the machinery of law and good order are in full and successful operation," particularly "since the despicable carpet-bag *regime* has been supplanted by intelligent and honest home government".[575]

Sectional reconciliation became a mantra among Florida boosters. The damning "beliefs" in Southern backwardness which French lamented were countered by bold assertions that Florida was becoming a "Northern colony" and "a Northern State as regards

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[573] Seth French [Florida State Commissioner of Immigration], *Semi-Tropical Florida: Its Climate, Soil, and Productions* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1879), p. 36 [UWF].

[574] Macdonald, *Plain Talk about Florida*, p. 22. French, *Semi-Tropical Florida*, p. 6.

[575] *Cincinnati Enquirer* quoted in Reed, "California vs. Florida", p. 517.

population, so many Northerners are now residing there."[576] This exaggeration carried a nugget of truth. From a tiny population of antebellum residents, peninsular Florida grew through arrivals from the North and Midwest, as well as the South, with citrus-growing counties like Sumter and Orange rising from a combined total of 2,536 to 12,262 between 1867 and 1880.[577] This in-migration began before 1876 but post-Reconstruction boosters saw it as proof of an abatement of sectional strife supposedly rendered by "Redemption". In his 1887 guide, Oliver Crosby – a settler from New England – thus stressed that, "Political Sectionalism is no longer a drawback to Northern emigration to Florida, if indeed it ever was except in a few isolated, intensely Southern communities…Northern men need not fear that they may blunder into such a community."[578] The 1882 state immigration guide explained how Polk County was exempt from "the deep political bitterness and old war prejudices that have proved so detrimental to society in other localities," while a booster for Sumter County flatly stated, "The war between the sections is over."[579]

Also "over" were Radical attempts to protect the rights of freedmen in the South. Redemption saw the imposition of a white supremacist society which Florida boosters invariably supported in lily-white visions of settlement. Yet, as economic developers, they also recognised benefits to be gained from African Americans, who constituted nearly half the state's population and were vital to its agricultural economy as railroad workers,

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[576] Barbour, *Florida*, p. 225. Daniel G. Tyler, *Where To Go In Florida* (New York: W. M. Clarke, 1881), p. 7 [UCF].

[577] Adams, *Florida*, p, 8. French, *Semi-Tropical Florida*, p. 53.

[578] Oliver M. Crosby, *Florida Facts both Bright and Blue: A Guide Book to Intending Settlers, Tourists, and Investors, from a Northerner's Standpoint* (New York: South Publishing Co., 1887), p. 123 [UWF].

[579] Robinson, *Florida: A Pamphlet*, p. 168. Richmond, *Sumter County, Florida*, p. 50.

labourers, and farmers. Indeed, immediately after the Civil War, state boosters had evoked "images of opportunity and even lushness" to fill needs for labourers, and thousands of African Americans arrived from other southern states.[580] As Leon Litwack wrote, "Florida [appeared] the 'land of plenty'" for blacks, "where homesteads were plentiful, wages high, and labourers scarce."[581] In his 1874 *Florida Settler* guide, Eagen praised, albeit faintly, this "migration of coloured labour" as being "only the more intelligent and thrifty class of coloured men – those who are possessed of some means, and have prudence and foresight enough to take care of it."[582] Many white Floridians, he knew, feared that this development would mean "the permanent predominance of the coloured element" and "would give rise to conditions…not…conducive to progress," scaring off capital and raising a "race-feeling".[583] Eagen, however, countered that blacks were suited to Florida's climate, were progressing as free citizens, and thus formed a welcome addition to a state that had "plenty of room" and offered "a golden opportunity for every industrious coloured man to grow independent."[584]

Such booster views essentially died a death along with Reconstruction. In the 1880s, as the Bourbon governorships of Drew and William Bloxham targeted Northern settlement and investment, Florida promoters hailed the republican opportunities for white settlers while depicting African Americans as fundamentally inferior and working to

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[580] Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Knopf, 1979), pp. 308-309.

[581] Ibid, pp. 308-309.

[582] Eagen, *The Florida Settler*, p. 16.

[583] Ibid, p. 16.

[584] Ibid, p. 17.

disenfranchise them as citizens. Anglo settlers were promised rewards for their labour in the semi-tropical peninsula. Colonel A. K. McClure's 1886 guidebook to the South thus pointed to "the new Florida that has been developed within the last few years that I regard as the most inviting part of the whole continent for the small farmer who can adapt himself to its climate and the simple but systematic method of culture that here produces the best results for labour to be found in any State of the Union."[585] This agriculture would be the basis for republican prosperity. In the aptly-titled 1879 pamphlet, *Semi-Tropical Florida*, Seth French wrote, "We want immigrants of kindred races, that we may be a homogeneous people…We do not wish to be misunderstood on this point; we do not want immigrants for subordinate positions, but, on the contrary, invite them to locate, and become the owners of their homes in fee simple forever; we want them to become citizens, and have with us equal political privileges and responsibilities in all the obligations imposed upon citizens under a republican government."[586] Agrarian imagery adorned the cover in the form of a grower plucking oranges on a semi-tropical farm:

[585] Col. A. K. McClure, *The South – Its Industrial, Financial, and Political Condition* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1886), p. 14.

[586] French, *Semi-Tropical Florida*, p. 20.

Fig. 3.2 – *Semi-Tropical Florida* Cover (1879) [UWF][587]

The selling of Florida agriculture was aided, one year later, when former President Ulysses S. Grant toured the state on a journey which also took him into the Caribbean and

[587] Cover of French, *Semi-Tropical Florida*.

Central America.[588] In a symbolic act, Grant turned over the first spade of earth for the planned South Florida Railroad which eventually linked Tampa and the Gulf coast with Jacksonville.[589] Like Hayes' trip to Southern California – which took place the same year – Grant's visit to and declarations about Florida were of great benefit to its promoters. Having marvelled at Florida's size – "an area greater than New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut combined" – Grant declared that the state "is capable of supplying all the oranges, lemons, pineapples, and other semi-tropical fruits used in the United States, and one hundred million dollars of sugar now imported".[590] It merely awaited an influx of energetic settlers to put the natural fertility to use. "With deposits of fertiliser under it and above it sufficient for many generations," Florida "only wants people and enterprise, both of which it is rapidly obtaining". Grant affirmed the promotional vision of a semi-tropical opening for the free labour model: "Florida to-day affords the best opening in the world for young men of small means and great industry."[591]

Grant's report featured initially in the *Philadelphia Ledger* but was reproduced in numerous publications disseminated by promotional bodies who saw in it official sanction for their own proclamations that Florida offered opportunities for advancement akin to the

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[588] Grant described Florida – especially, its suitability for tropical fruits and sugar cane – in language reminiscent of his fascination with the Dominican Republic, which, as president, he had tried and failed to annex: see U.S. Grant, "Memorandum", in John Y. Simon, *The Papers of U. S. Grant, Vol. 20: Nov. 1, 1869 – October 31, 1870* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), pp. 74-76.

[589] Barbour, *Florida*, p. 162.

[590] Ulysses S. Grant, *Extract from the Philadelphia Ledger* reproduced in *The Gulf Coast of Florida* (Chicago: Gulf Coast Land Company, 1885), pp. 16-17.

[591] Ibid, pp. 16-17.

antebellum West – but on small tracts of semi-tropical land.[592] The Southern state's soil was inferior to that of, say, Illinois or Iowa, yet, crucially, was "perfectly adapted to the climate and semi-tropical productions of the country, and will yield a more bountiful return to the good husbandman than any other soil on the face of the globe".[593] Whether or not Grant's appraisal influenced Hamilton Disston – a Philadelphia capitalist engaged in drainage operations in Southern Florida – into purchasing four million acres of state land the following year is unknown; but Disston's land companies repeated Grant's description of a land upholding free labour ideals.[594] One reproduced Grant's words in their entirety before expanding on them: "On general principles a start in Florida costs no more and often less than in the west…*Everything depends upon the man*; some have tact to turn everything into cash, while others walk over dollars without knowing it. Energy, industry and common sense are needed, and pay as well in Florida as anywhere in America."[595] After the Disston sale, the state government was freed of its debt and granted millions of acres of land to Northern-owned railroads. By 1890 Florida's railway mileage had risen five-fold to 2,489

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[592] See James H. Foss [Ex-Deputy Commissioner of the United States Department of Agriculture], *Florida Facts, Found After a Four Years' Search* (Boston: Rand Avery Company Printers, 1886), p. 6. *Florida Portrayed: Its Sections, Climate, Productions, Resources, Etc.* (London: 'The South' Publishing Company, 1884), p. 8 [UF].

[593] *Florida, Its Soil, Climate, Health, Productions, Resources, and Advantages* (Jacksonville: Florida Land Agency, 1875), p. 3 [UF].

[594] See *Gulf Coast of Florida*, pp. 16-17. The Disston drainage scheme and its effects on Florida boosterism will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

[595] Emphasis in original: Ibid, p. 20.

miles, with the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railway alone having obtained 2,000,000 acres of land.[596]

To sell this domain, land and railroad promoters linked the peninsula with the republican settlement of the West. George Barbour first came to Florida as a correspondent for the *Chicago Times* on Grant's 1880 tour and was sufficiently enamoured with the state to settle there as commissary for the South Florida Railroad. Citing "the multifarious inquiries addressed to the State Bureau of Immigration," Barbour became convinced of "a real demand for an adequate and trustworthy descriptive work on Florida" and set out – with the blessings of the state governor and commissioner of immigration – to produce one.[597] Barbour interpreted Florida as a state hindered by a Southern past and yet eminently capable of the progressive development "of all our Western States".[598] The peninsular state, "with its many and rapidly increasing lines of water and rail communications…, cheap rates, and rapid transit," even offered superior advantages to the "far-off, bleak, inhospitable West". Of "Semi-tropical Florida," by which he meant much of the peninsula, Barbour wrote, "It is the region where many of the products of both the temperate and tropical climates may be found growing side by side," and which "probably produces the greatest variety of marketable and profitable crops of any region in our country."[599] Acknowledging that the "experiment of a man, especially with a family, transferring all his

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[596] In 1886, the *Railway Age* reported that, with 289 miles added, "Florida built more railway track last year than any other state": Mayo, *Florida, An Advancing State*, p. 98. Varnum, *Florida, Its Climate, Productions, and Characteristics*, p. 46.

[597] Barbour, *Florida*, p. 3.

[598] Ibid, p. 294

[599] Ibid, p. 22.

interests and hopes from a temperate to a semi-tropical region, is necessarily a trying one," Barbour differed from earlier guidebook writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe by placing Florida firmly within American traditions of republican expansion, in which "living without labour is not possible, and here as elsewhere the great law prevails, that in the sweat of his brow shall man eat his bread." Like Grant, Barbour cast Florida as "beyond all other regions of America the most favoured for poor people with little capital but of industrious disposition, able and willing to work."[600]

William H. Martin, meanwhile, stressed Florida's similarities with Southern California. In 1881 the Florida Land and Improvement Company, in charge of Disston lands, appointed Martin (formerly of the California Immigrant Union) as their Land Commissioner. Martin travelled through peninsular Florida "with a view of attending to the subdivision and colonising" of the company's lands, including 120,000 acres in Orange County on sale from $2 to $10 per acre.[601] Promoting small-scale citrus culture, he employed the same promotional tropes he had used to sell California, even declaring that Florida's "climate is very similar to that of California" and that he was "surprised, completely, in reference to the productions of Florida, and *in all my travels through the State of California*, I have never seen as many orange groves as I saw in Orange County."[602] Under Martin's direction the company's pamphlets contrasted Florida's meritocratic agriculture – where "everything depends upon the man" – with the industrial North. "The better classes of the northern States, now crowded so compactly in our large cities or working out subsistence in manufacturing villages and towns, because of the sharp

[600] Barbour, *Florida*, p. 294.

[601] William H. Martin in *Florida, Its Climate, Soil and Productions*, p. 25.

[602] Emphasis in original: Ibid, p. 32.

competition of skilled ingenuity, may find here an opportunity to start abreast with developing enterprise." In semi-tropical Florida they could thus discover "the sure reward of thrift and well-directed energy".[603] Settlers would have to adapt but the fruits of labour would make it worthwhile. An 1886 treatise on orange-growing explained that Northerners could,

> Learn [citrus cultivation], and even learn to love to work. The sweet sleep and refreshing rest under the soothing anodyne of labour would come without the learning. After a while would come the noble independence of a *free man*. Try it, young man, try it! Come from the crowded city to the country! Come South, come to Florida.[604]

In booster eyes, this "free man" was white, just as French's "homogeneous people" was a racially exclusive vision. For Florida promoters, asserting the free labour model, semi-tropical fertility allowed for a settler's success to be a matter of individual worth and ability, unlike in the teeming North, where social conditions made upward mobility that much harder. "Poor men [in the North], whose means are too limited to enable them to buy and stock a farm, where lands are dear and building improvements expensive," stated a representative pamphlet, "…provided they have industry, energy, pluck, and perseverance, can vastly improve their condition, and the prospects of their families, by coming to

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[603] *Florida, Its Climate, Soil and Productions*, p. 33.

[604] Emphasis in original: Rev. T. W. Moore, *Treatise and Handbook of Orange Culture in Florida, Louisiana, and California* (New York: E. R. Pelton & Co., 1886), p. 145 [UNF].

Florida".[605] Yet African Americans struggling against those same conditions, and more, in Florida, were depicted as thriftless and lazy – a damning verdict in any case, but perhaps more so in promotional literature which repeatedly stressed that Florida "holds forth her hand in hearty welcome…[to] the poor, honest man…who comes to her seeking a comfortable home, and is neither ashamed nor too lazy to work for it."[606] For land promoters in the post-Reconstruction years, the state's freedmen were precisely those "too lazy to work for it," and yet were also, paradoxically, considered ideally suited to brutish fieldwork. "While the African is as necessary in clearing away forests and in hard manual labour as the Irishman is at the North," Oliver Crosby wrote in 1887, "now that he is free he has no idea of working more than is barely necessary to keep him in pork and grits."[607] Indeed, "with all the progress claimed for the coloured man, it will be ages before the negro as a rule is a thrifty, honest labourer"; incoming white settlers, therefore, need not fear competition from the African American population since the "average southern darky" was "utterly shiftless and devoid of honour" and a failure in the free labour ideology.[608] This racial "rule" shaped the attitudes of incoming whites who, in the North, might have felt differently: according to Crosby (perhaps speaking from experience, since he had come from New England), the "most ardent but honest Republicans often broaden their views [on racial equality] after a visit to the land where the Fifteenth Amendment means something."[609]

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[605] Jacques, *Florida as a Permanent Home*, p. 3.

[606] Harcourt, *Home Life in Florida*, p. 16.

[607] Crosby, *Florida Facts Both Bright and Blue*, p. 21.

[608] Ibid, p. 125.

[609] Ibid, p. 111.

Leading promoters like James Wood Davidson were politically active in the repealing of statutes of racial equality instigated by Reconstruction governments. A reporter in New York who became a fruit grower in South Florida, Davidson was held in such esteem by his neighbours that he was chosen as Dade County's representative to the State Constitutional Convention in 1885. The new constitution created a poll tax and other restrictive measures which began a process of legitimising African American disenfranchisement in Florida. In his state guidebook – published in 1889, by which point few African Americans in the state were allowed to vote – Davidson cast racial hierarchy as a benefit to Florida's development. "During the period between 1865 and 1876 these slaves worked faithfully in the plantation of politics," Davidson wrote; "but at the latter date a second emancipation changed their status slightly, and since then they have been working somewhat more and voting rather less, and are doing vastly better in all important respects. So also is Florida prospering. The future fortunes of the negroes are largely in the hands of the controlling race, and they themselves will probably have little to do in shaping it; and doubtless the less they have to do with it the better."[610]

After Reconstruction, the *de facto* and *de jure* subordination and segregation of African Americans in Florida evolved into reinforcing processes for the booster visions of a society of prosperous and independent semi-tropical land-owners. The colonialist and republican narratives were compatible due to the pervasive Anglo belief that African Americans lacked the requisite character to succeed in a free labour environment (although they served well enough as field labourers). Thus, in Barbour's verdict, "The negro…will not play a permanent or prominent part in Florida. In moderate numbers, no doubt, he will

[610] Davidson, *The Florida of To-Day*, pp. 113-4.

always be found there, but his shiftless, incompetent, and indolent ways will not long be endured by the class of vigorous and thoroughgoing Northern and Western men who constitute the bulk of the immigration to Florida at present."[611] In a similar vein, Helen Harcourt lamented the lack of productivity of "the present generation of free-born coloured ladies and gentlemen" who were "of a far different class from the faithful old slaves of yore," while stating that, for white settlers, "a comfortable competence" "is…here waiting for the self-chosen ones, who elect to take advantage of the gift so freely offered to those who have manhood enough to grasp it and make the best use of it."[612] The fundamental link was that African Americans lacked the "manhood" and intelligence "to make the best use" of republican freedom. Their impoverishment and disenfranchisement, therefore, were justified if not inevitable. In Semi-Tropical America, racial hierarchy and republican opportunity would flourish side-by-side. Harcourt thus proclaimed that "the code of morality…does not stand high among the majority of the coloured race," while promising to the "vast army [of whites in the North] who struggle on from day to day, overworked, underpaid, or not paid at all" that "every energetic man may make a reality for himself if he will but seize and hold Florida's royal bounty".[613]

Conclusion

Promotional visions of semi-tropical agriculture played significant roles in the selling of Southern California and Florida to settlers from the North and Midwest. State boosters shared in and responded to an increasing sense of unease among Americans who sensed,

[611] Barbour, *Florida*, p. 238.

[612] Harcourt, *Home Life in Florida*, pp. 17, 345.

[613] Ibid, pp. 15, 358.

with good reason, that the opportunities for landed independence which were available to their forefathers had diminished. America's frustrated agrarian myth was projected onto semi-tropical regions which provided special conditions for small farmers. *"*We have practically a monopoly of the semi-tropical fruits in the United States," Isaac N. Hoag wrote. "Florida is the only formidable competitor of California in these fruits, and both states together can not supply the demand."[614]

California possessed a distinct advantage over Florida in this competition. Promoters envisaged a unique merging of "Western" and semi-tropical traits in Southern California's agriculture. Although, initially, Southern California growers looked to Florida for advice and expertise, the West Coast region grew rapidly in the 1880s, as Southern legacies hindered Floridian efforts to induce immigration through visions of rewarded labour. In 1885, the *Florida Annual* reported, "One of the most common inquiries made concerning Florida's climate, by men from sections further north, is whether a man from such places can 'work out' in Florida sun with impunity."[615] Northern concerns about migrating to a state home to a large emancipated African American population compounded settler apathy. Promoters in the 1880s, leaving behind the murkier racial climate of Reconstruction, thus increasingly depicted blacks as little more than manual workers who were incapable of succeeding in a free labour environment and were being "controlled" by independent white citizens.

Boosters in both states, however, shared in flawed critiques of urban-industrial "progress" – not of capitalist development but of Northern tendencies toward urban living

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[614] Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World*, pp. 23-4.

[615] Munroe (ed.), *The Florida Annual*, p. 34.

and wage employment. California promoters echoed the Florida booster who called to those in the North living "the precarious life of a salaried clerk, book-keeper, or salesmen, shut in-doors all day and every day, from morning till night, earning barely enough to keep up appearances before the world," to claim "the free, manly life of the farmer or fruit-grower, breathing God's pure air, uncontaminated by the dust and smoke of cities, living a life of comfort and freedom from care, even if one of honest daily toil, and storing up for the future a sufficient independence for himself and his family."[616] Into the 1890s, boosters of California and Florida strived for an agricultural future which incorporated commercial development. Thus, promoters of and horticulturists in semi-tropical California, while articulating the republican rhetoric of Populism, directed their energies less into political protest and more into cooperative and booster projects. Heightened land values reinforced beliefs in their own agricultural progress and diminished the appeal of Populism, such that "small wheat growers in isolated rural regions made up the bulk of California's relatively weak Populist movement."[617] For promoters, Southern California's semi-tropical agriculture was the foundation for a society which bypassed unhealthy modern tendencies toward urban crowding and rampant industrialism. An 1891 magazine article thus stated, "The middle classes of California will always draw their living from the soil," since "manufacturing will not develop to any great extent for many years to come" and "the products of which the State appears to have a natural monopoly promise to support a dense population, spread over the country in colonies, on small farms, and in loosely built

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[616] Harcourt, *Home Life in Florida*, p. 17.

[617] Vaught, *Cultivating California*, p. 46. For Populism in California, see Postel, *The Populist Vision*, pp. 106-115.

towns."[618] The promoter concluded, "No other part of the United States is developing under similar conditions, and hence the economic history of California has the importance of a new experiment."[619]

The agricultural imagery was identical in Florida, however, a state which had, by the 1890s, also developed into a distinctive agricultural region. As Charlton Tebeau has written, through semi-tropical fruits and winter vegetables, the state "moved in new economic directions that set [it] apart from…the other states of the lower South".[620] This contributed to why Populism never took hold in Florida either, although the state, surprisingly, was chosen to host the National Farmer's Alliance Convention at Ocala in 1890.[621] Boosterism, however, was the defining theme of the Ocala convention, which "prove[d] an excellent opportunity to advertise the state," as organisers created a "Semi-Tropical Exposition" that displayed Florida's fruits and vegetables to the visitors from the Midwest.[622] "The same mix of boosterism and social criticism that characterised the California Alliance was to be found among the Floridians who hosted the Ocala meeting," Robert McMath writes.[623] As in California, Florida's semi-tropical agriculture was regarded

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[618] Charles Shinn, "Social Changes in California", *Popular Science Monthly* (April 1891), np [Charles H. Shinn Papers, BL].

[619] Ibid, np.

[620] Tebeau, *A History of Florida*, p. 257.

[621] Kathryn T. Abbey, "Florida Versus the Principles of Populism, 1896-1911", *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (1938), pp. 462-475.

[622] Samuel Proctor, "The National Farmers' Alliance Convention of 1890 and Its 'Ocala Demands'", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (January 1950), pp. 162-163.

[623] "Central Florida, though geographically southern, was not part of the cotton south. Its emerging fruit and vegetable farms, made possible by modern transportation and marketing systems, made the Ocala region more

as qualitatively different from the declining fortunes of "traditional" American farming. As they shared in the republican ideals of Populism, promoters saw and sold their lands as agriculturally unique: home to healthful small farms which upheld both capitalist and agrarian progress. Thus for Anglo-Americans, in an age of industrial dominance, semi-tropical agriculture augured a better future. A Florida booster wrote, "It will take years to develop the resources of the State, but we are firmly convinced that it will eventually turn out the jewel of the American Republic on the Atlantic, as California is on the Pacific."[624]

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like the California valleys than the older staple-crop regions of cotton, tobacco, corn, and wheat, from which the Alliance had arisen": McMath, *American Populism*, p. 139.

[624] "Immigration to Florida", *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 1, No. 42 (October 17, 1874), p. 332 [UF].

Chapter 4

Desert and Swamp:

The Conquest of Semi-Tropical Nature in the Progressive Era

As agricultural development altered the physical environments and social conditions of both states into the Progressive Era, land promoters of Southern California and peninsular Florida looked to new interior domains for further republican expansion. Although complete opposites in being regarded, respectively, as desert and swamp – areas which were either excessively dry or wet – the two states faced the same fundamental issue: the conversion of "forbidding" natures into American homelands which could be marketed for their rare natural potential.[625] In Southern California and South Florida, an array of agricultural boosters, landowners, chambers of commerce, and state and railroad agents involved in reclamation cultivated what David Nye has called "foundation narratives" to entice settlers and visitors to areas previously denigrated as savage and inhospitable. Creation narratives, as Nye writes, have pervaded ideas of American development since the Revolutionary period: "The foundation stories that white Americans have told about the reconstruction and habitation of a new space are secular stories about what in many cultures are religious matters: how a group comes to dwell in a particular space, and how it wields power to transform the land and make a living from it."[626] For California and Florida promoters, irrigation and drainage assumed vital significance in the reconstruction of once "worthless" lands. As Floridian Fred Pfeiffer wrote in 1905 of the twin reclamation

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[625] Frank Presbrey, *Florida, Cuba, and Jamaica* (New York: Matthews-Northrup Co., 1900), pp. 3-4 [USF].

[626] David E. Nye, *America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), p. 6.

processes, "The places where only silence and barrenness in one instance, and richest vegetation in the other, held reign, are yielding to constant application of scientific energy, and when the work shall have been finished, what will have been accomplished?"[627] The result, promoters asserted, would be the republican conquest of semi-tropical nature.

This chapter analyses the promotion of two critical sites of reclamation in the early twentieth century: California's Imperial Valley and the Florida Everglades. My interest is not in the complex technological processes of irrigation and drainage but in placing these major projects within the evolving visions of socioeconomic and racial progress which sold the semi-tropical states. By the 1890s, Southern California and peninsular Florida were considerably more populous and well-known than a generation earlier, and vast interior lowlands – which had yet to be settled by white Americans – became new focal points for extensive promotional and developmental efforts. To be sure, irrigation and drainage had been crucial factors for a generation already, up to the 1893 banking collapse which triggered a nationwide depression and a temporary halt to many projects. In both states, irrigation and drainage contributed to increases in populations and land values, as promoters articulated neo-Jeffersonian visions of agricultural development in which reclamation was a "civilising agent" that supported republican settlement.[628] State growth gave legitimacy to the booster visions. Between 1880 and 1890, the populations of Southern California and peninsular Florida rose from 64,371 to 201,352 and 71,010 to

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[627] Fred Pfeiffer, "Drainage vs. Irrigation", *Florida East Coast Homeseeker*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (February 1905), p. 8. [Hereafter cited as *FECH*]

[628] T. W. Haskins, "Irrigation as a Civilising Agent", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (July 1894), p. 40. "Florida! Her Statistics and Prosperity" [Interview with Governor William Bloxham in *New Orleans Times-Democrat*], reproduced in *Florida Dispatch*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 17, 1882), pp. 50-51 [UF].

147,695, respectively, and by the latter date each state was producing over a million boxes of citrus fruits annually.[629] Land prices rose in prime semi-tropical fruit areas like Los Angeles County, California, and Orange County, Florida, which often became prohibitively expensive. Ambitious promoters thus turned to interior deserts and wetlands which had intimidated their predecessors but now represented untapped resources where the control of water appeared the singular obstacle to agricultural expansion. Matching the fertility of more populous parts of the states but at cheaper prices, Imperial Valley and the Everglades became the next frontiers of Semi-Tropical America.

In a microcosm of the inter-state relationship, Everglade promoters pointed to Southern California irrigation, and Imperial Valley, especially, as evidence for the potential of their own drainage schemes. This imitative approach reflected the growing sophistication of California promotion. The corresponding conditions of the states' public booster organisations were particularly telling. In the 1890s, the California State Board of Trade developed into a leading promoter which published highly-detailed state guides. The equivalent in Florida, the State Bureau of Immigration, had to be temporarily disbanded by the legislature in 1891 due to insufficient funds.[630] That year, meanwhile, the Southern California Bureau of Information formed after delegates from across the region convened in

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[629] *New Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1891), p. 19 [CSL]. Harry Ellington Brook, *The Land of Sunshine: An Authentic Description of Its Natural Features, Resources, and Prospects* (Los Angeles: Southern California Bureau of Information, 1893), p. 6 [BL]. *Fifth Census of the State of Florida, Taken in the Year 1925* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Agriculture, 1926), pp. 16-17 [UCF]

[630] *California, Early History…* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1898) [CSL]. "Under New Auspices", *Monthly Bulletin – Florida Bureau of Immigration*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (1891), p. 4 [UF]

Los Angeles to bolster their promotional plans. The stellar efforts of such privately-financed groups, alongside citrus displays in the Midwest, enabled Californians to claim with legitimacy, "It is generally admitted that no section of the United States is more thoroughly and intelligently advertised than Los Angeles and Southern California."[631] Different organisations also teamed up to promote the region. In 1907, the Southern Pacific Company combined with the state's agricultural powerhouse, the California Fruit Growers' Exchange, to conduct an expensive advertising campaign in Iowa, in which the Midwestern state was bill-boarded with the slogan "Oranges for Health, California for Wealth," and Iowans were enticed not only to buy more citrus but also to migrate west.[632]

The onus on promoting Florida similarly fell to private entities – railroads, hotel and land companies, and chambers of commerce – which together raised the insufficient funds for the state's exhibit at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago.[633] The Exposition presented Florida with an opportunity to compete with California – especially after the Western state "challenged" Florida's organisers to a "competitive exhibit of semi-tropical fruits" – but they produced an uninspiring exhibit which failed to match the impressive California display co-organised by the Southern Pacific Railroad.[634] Money and expertise

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[631] Brook, *The Land of Sunshine*, p. 3. *New Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California*, p. 20.

[632] Rahno Mabel MacCurdy, *The History of the California Fruit Growers Exchange* (Los Angeles: G. Rice & Sons, 1925), p. 59.

[633] Joel M. Hoffman, "From Augustine to Tangerine: Florida at the U.S. World's Fair", *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 23 (1998), pp. 48-85.

[634] "Florida challenged to compete with California in a World's Fair Exhibit", *Los Angeles Times* (July 6, 1890), p. 4. Stephen Kerber, "Florida and the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (July 1987), pp. 47-54.

distinguished Southern California's promotional schemes. A booster in the *Florida East Coast Homeseeker* thus wrote in 1907, "The State of Florida might learn some very valuable lessons from the pushing, energetic people of the State of California. There the counties and State spend large sums of money in advertising, while cities, towns and individuals contribute their dollars to this great end."[635]

Imperial Valley and the Everglades also epitomised the desert-swamp dichotomy which distinguished Southern California from Florida, and had given to the former, as the "dry" state, a subtle advantage. To be sure, its desert reputation hindered promoters, too, since initially migrants to the West avoided arid Southern California – opting instead for areas which shared more commonalities (trees and rainfall) with the eastern lands they left behind. "Though they love their land with passionate fervour, they have been told that it was a desert," Charles H. Shinn wrote in 1881 of Southern California boosters, referring not only to historic conceptions of the Great American Desert but also to contemporary reports in the East which seized on "occasional seasons of drought" to "straightaway deride" the region.[636] The analogy chosen by a railroad promoter in 1885 was thus apt, "A generation ago California was as unknown as the Sahara."[637] As promoters combated this "derision," however, irrigation took on relevance as both a material process which turned desert into garden and an allegorical one which crafted homelands from "a region of

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[635] "Powell is Anxious to Know", *FECH*, Vol. 9, No. 9 (September 1907), p. 290.

[636] Charles Shinn, "Southern California", *Californian*, Vol. 3, No. 17 (May 1881), p. 446 [BL].

[637] L. H. Nutting, *To the Pacific Coast via the Sunset Route of the Southern Pacific Company* (New York: New York General Agency, 1885), p. 10 [CSL].

drought and barrenness".[638] Irrigation also was central to the selling visions of California as an exceptional type of semi-tropics. Americans were persuaded that, unlike Florida, Southern California avoided any tropical dampness which supposedly created unhealthy populations. The *San Diego Union* responded to letters from Easterners concerned about the Western state's environment by citing a doctor who explained that, although the region was semi-tropical, it suffered from "no excess of rainfall" as did most semi-tropic countries. In this regard, Southern California was an enhanced version of its "zone". Scant winter rains "account for the lack of that luxuriant vegetation which many expect to find in a semi-tropical country," but this "lack" was in fact a boon. Semi-tropical aridity was preferable to tropical dampness since "rank vegetation, and the abundant moisture that causes it, are not conducive to the salubrity of a climate, and more is gained than lost by their absence."[639]

California promoters continuously asserted that aridity and semi-tropicality were not mutually exclusive: a desert land sufficiently irrigated could be as fertile as a rainforest (Egypt was frequently cited as an example).[640] Yet desert origins made for a better semi-tropical land. The irrigated colony of Redlands thus offered "a climate that is dry, warm and yet not enervating".[641] A. J. Wells of the Southern Pacific Railroad wrote, "If the air here was moist as well as warm it would be depressing. A damp, humid, warm atmosphere

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[638] A. J. Wells, *California for the Settler – The Natural Advantages of the Golden State for the Present Day Farmer* (San Francisco: Southern Pacific Company, 1914), p. 43 [CSL].

[639] Robert Gregg, M.D., "The Climatic Advantages of San Diego", *San Diego Union* (October 20, 1883), np ["San Diego County – California Pamphlets", CSL].

[640] R. R. Newman, "Irrigation – Past and Present", *Sunset*, Vol. 1, No. 5 (September 1898), p. 82.

[641] "Redlands", *Sunset*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (December 1899), p. 73.

fosters vegetable growth, but induces languor and disease."[642] But semi-tropical California's environment was compatible with civilised progress.[643] As Lionel Sheldon, former Governor of California, wrote in 1894, "There are some countries where heat and moisture are so great that vegetation grows so rapidly and in such rankness as almost to defy human effort to control or subject it. This occurs where rain and heat are excessive…[and] there is a tendency to luxurious life which is obstructive to growth of civilisation".[644] If Sheldon did not directly refer to Florida, his description of rampant "vegetation" and "rain and heat" obstructing civilised development resonated emphatically with Anglo reservations about Florida, which, while ideal for the "luxurious life" of winter tourism, was deemed less fit for energetic society. Through the irrigated "control" of nature, however, Southern California suffered no problems of tropical "rankness" and was becoming a superior civilisation.

More suggestive of the idealised tropics, Florida and its wet and wooded interior brought to American minds languidness and lethargy. A Floridian lamented, "It is customary to assert that the climate of California is bracing and stimulating…; and that of Florida is sluggish and soporific."[645] The southern state's boosters strived to quell these fears, with the drainage of wetlands indicating conquest over degenerative "tropical" effects as well as the opening of fertile acreage. They also looked to California's irrigated

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[642] A. J. Wells quoted in "The Value of Climate", *Sunset*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (August 1904), p. 381.

[643] "Los Angeles Temperature", *Los Angeles Herald* (September 3, 1905), p. 1.

[644] Lionel A. Sheldon [Former State Governor], "Southern California: Conditions Conducive to Progress of Civilisation", *Californian*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (January 1894), p. 208 [UCLA].

[645] S. Powers, "Florida and California", *Florida Farmer and Fruit Grower*, Vol. 1, No. 14 (April 6, 1887), p. 108 [UF].

transformation, apparent in provisions of West Coast fruits, flora, and vines displayed at expositions in the East and Midwest which, as the commissioner of that state's display in New Orleans wrote, showed "that California is not a desert waste or inaccessible mountains, but a garden spot, susceptible of great results through the efforts of industry and skill."[646] The editors of the *Florida Agriculturist* took note, pointing to how "the Californians have made deserts fertile by irrigation" as a guide for their own state's reclamation.[647]

Southern California and peninsular Florida were parts of a broader reclamation story. Across the West and South, desert and swamp lands were depicted as fresh sources for American settlement after the closing of the frontier in 1890. Although the cost and scale of irrigation and drainage schemes increasingly required government support, reclamation promoters described it as a renewing force for independent citizenship. Profit motives merged with ideas of "social engineering" in their plans.[648] In keeping with other Progressive social reforms concerned with mediating "the impact of [industrial] change on individual values," irrigation and drainage represented healthy schemes for a post-frontier nation.[649] For boosters, reclamation would serve as a counterbalance to modern socioeconomic travails associated with urban congestion and the fast-rising "cost of living"

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[646] A. A. Andrews [Commissioner, California Display], "Fruits of the Exposition", *New Orleans Times-Democrat* (September 1, 1885), p. 17.

[647] "The Orange Outlook", *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 30, No. 18 (April 29, 1903), p. 269.

[648] Donald J. Pisani, "Reclamation and Social Engineering in the Progressive Era", *Agricultural History*, Vol. 57 (1983), pp. 46-63.

[649] Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 92-119.

in the inflationary 1900s.[650] "A few years ago our farm boys were flocking to the cities in thousands, deserting the plow and leaving the crops to be gathered by the inefficient," John L. Matthews wrote in *Hampton's* magazine. "But as the cost of living has gone up, as the control of business has centred in vast corporations, as the life of man in the city has come to be more and more guided and controlled for him, there has been a revulsion and young men and young women turn to the country again, seeking independent livelihood." America's solution lay with "irrigation and swamp drainage," which enabled "farming without the old drudgery" and promised "a healthier and stronger home life for the upbringing of independent Americans."[651]

Reclamation was also infused with the utilitarian outlook of conservationism, which, in contrast to staunch preservationists who lauded wilderness in its untouched forms, saw nature as a set of resources to be used prudently by man.[652] "The rise of peoples from savagery to civilisation" had impelled a "steadily increasing growth of the amount demanded by…man from the actual resources of the country," President Theodore Roosevelt declared at a 1908 White House conference on conservation, with "the limit of unsettled land…in sight, and indeed but little land fitted for agriculture [which] now remains unoccupied save what can be reclaimed by irrigation and drainage."[653] In 1902 the

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[650] "Back to the Land", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 6 (June 1910), p. 220. Wells, *California for the Settler*, p. 43.

[651] John L. Hampton, "The Rush to the Swamp Lands", *Hamptons* reproduced in *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), p. 125.

[652] Stephen Fox, *The American Conservation Movement: John Muir and His Legacy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1985).

[653] Theodore Roosevelt, "Opening Address by the President", in Newton C. Blanchard (ed.), *Proceedings of a Conference of Governors in the White House* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1909), p. 6.

federal government passed the Reclamation Act to initiate federal funding for land reclamation. Western irrigation promoters responded eagerly to the legislation, "The business of the commonwealth is to strengthen itself, and this can be done by internal expansion."[654]

The type of expansion was crucial here. As David Nye writes of western irrigationists, "They called for expansion of the United States within its own borders, rather than for the acquisition of imperial possessions abroad."[655] For the majority of Americans, reclamation within continental borders represented a far less objectionable form of national growth, in part because it fitted with republican rather than imperialistic conceptions of American expansion.[656] In the 1890s, however, the closing of the frontier and an intense socioeconomic depression encouraged a national drive for tropical expansion which culminated in the acquisition (in different guises) of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippines.[657] These tropical territories were desired as markets for over-produced American goods and as "strategic" global possessions; but they were also widely regarded as unsuitable settlement locations for Anglo-Americans, for whom tropical colonies not only undermined cherished concepts of post-colonial identity but were considered socially

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[654] William MacLeod Raine, "Where Water Works Wonders", *Sunset*, Vol. 11, No. 5 (September 1903), p. 404.

[655] Nye, *America as Second Creation*, p. 237.

[656] David Healy, *U.S. Expansionism: The Imperialist Urge in the 1890s* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1970), p. 236.

[657] Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963).

and racially "un-American" lands.[658] Republicanism was incompatible with the tropics, which were predominantly inhabited by Latin and African races – as reported Senator Carl Schurz, in 1893, in response to the proposed annexation of Hawaii: "It is a matter of universal experience that democratic institutions have never on a large scale prospered in tropical latitudes. The so-called republics existing under the tropical sun constantly vibrate between anarchy and despotism."[659]

California and Florida boosters explicitly and implicitly contrasted their reclaimed "tropical" lands with America's new overseas empire. In magazines, political speeches, and land pamphlets, reclamation boosters of Imperial Valley and the Everglades built upon the precedents set by earlier state promoters in depicting lands for small farmers which possessed tropical characteristics. The arguably harsher environments of Imperial Valley and the Everglades impelled more emphatic claims – "tropical" as often as "semi-tropical". These were hotter climates than Los Angeles County or the St. Johns River area, to be sure, but the tropical allusions, proliferating in the post-1898 period, were influenced by America's tropical expansion. Imperial Valley and the Everglades were sold as unique lands which were both tropical *and* republican. Inheriting the earlier free labour ideals of semi-tropical agriculture as a meritocratic occupation for small farmers, reclamation promoters depicted tropical regions for Anglo-Americans – "back to the land" settlers who could exchange urban crowding, class divisions, and corporate dominance, for small,

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[658] Eric T. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[659] Carl Schurz, "Manifest Destiny", *Harpers*, Vol. 87, No. 521 (October 1893), p. 740.

"scientific" farms that formed the backbone of new republican communities.[660] Of irrigation, Imperial Valley booster A. J. Wells wrote in 1910:

> It is the development of natural resources; it involves national prosperity; it adds stability to national life. The most valuable citizen, other things being equal, is the man who owns the land from which he makes his living. The wandering labourer, the restless miner, the lonely herdsman, add little to the strength or safety of a community. But attach one of these men to the soil, let him own a small farm and he becomes a citizen who can be depended on and will add to the stability of those institutions which we most highly prize.[661]

This uplifting vision of republicanism through reclamation was mirrored by boosters of South Florida drainage. Everglades promoter and prominent conservationist John Gifford wrote, "Since ten acres or less is sufficient for the support of a family in this climate, there is room for 376,000 families," making reclamation into "the production of happy and prosperous homes."[662]

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[660] Newman, "Irrigation – Past and Present", p. 82.

[661] A. J. Wells, *Government Irrigation and the Settler – California, Oregon, Nevada and Arizona, including a Description of the Imperial Valley Project* (San Francisco: Southern Pacific Passenger Department, 1910), p. 7 [CSL].

[662] John Gifford, "Southern Florida – Notes on the Forest Conditions of the Southernmost Part of This Remarkable Peninsula" written for *Forestry and Irrigation* in 1904, reprinted as chapter two in Gifford, *The*

The republican visions of Imperial Valley and the Everglades, however, both absorbed and obscured the racial conquests and class divisions which informed their "reconstructions". In the popular imagination, desert and swamp were "savage" environments unfit for civilised agricultural habitation.[663] Long viewed as undesirable by white settlers, these environments often were inhabited only by Native Americans who had been pushed out of other highly-sought after areas (such as the Seminoles who retreated to Florida's Everglades). In a dialectical pattern, however, this further legitimised white conceptions of the mutual "savagery" of Native Americans and the desert or swamp lands they inhabited. Tourism promoters of Southern California and Southern Florida thus evinced a fascination with Indians as human symbols of "primitive" environments which were said to be vanishing from the modern landscape. Tourists in California were promised encounters with "strange tribes of the desert [who] greet them in intervening wild spots, offering quaint wares of pottery and fabrics of half-barbaric pattern".[664] Florida excursion companies took tourists into the Everglades from the 1890s, with the Florida East Coast Hotel Company advertising journeys through time as much as space. "From Miami a small boat will carry the curious visitor up into the wildest stretches of the Everglades, the last of the waste lands east of the Mississippi which remain unreclaimed, and which have held for years all the mystery and romance…which [the] mind can conjure up. Here he may catch a glimpse in their native haunts of the Seminoles, the sole remaining remnant of the Indian

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Everglades and other essays relating to Southern Florida (Kansas City: Everglades Land Sales Co., 1911), p. 18 [UM].

[663] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Knopf, 1957), p. 204.

[664] "El Camino Real", *Sunset*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (October 1898), p. 88.

tribes that once roamed over Dixie."[665] For land boosters, the displacement of "wild" Native Americans was an inevitable part of the internal expansion achieved through reclamation. Native American dispossession failed to inspire the levels of opposition which were raised against overseas imperialism, perhaps because Indian removal was a more familiar strand within white America's historical identity. Like their broader semi-tropical states, Imperial Valley and the Everglades were thus imagined and sold in similar, if inverted, ways: as wastelands inhabited by Native Americans or Mexicans which could finally be "redeemed" by the science and settlement of white Americans.

Corporate agribusiness, furthermore, ultimately dominated in Imperial Valley and in the Everglades. Paradoxically, as boosters like Wells and Ingraham sold reclamation as a "virtuous" process which replaced the "wandering labourer" with a settled, independent citizenry, migratory labour by poorly-paid ethnic and racial minorities became a fixture in the reclaimed landscapes. These stark divisions between land-owners and field-workers characterised the increasingly capital-intensive nature of semi-tropical agriculture in California and Florida.[666] Promotional literature often shied away from the agribusiness dependence on and control over migratory workers, encouraging settlers instead to focus on

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[665] Florida East Coast Hotel Company, *East Coast of Florida* (St. Augustine: J. D. Rahner, 1901-02), p. 68 [FSU].

[666] Richard Steven Street, *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769-1919* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. xvi-xviii. Cindy Hahamovitch, *The Fruits of their Labor: Atlantic Coast Farmworkers and the Making of Migrant Poverty, 1870-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 3-7.

the agrarian prosperity enjoyed by land-owners.[667] As Richard Steven Street writes of California, "Constant migration and a marginal existence kept farmworkers separated from mainstream society" – a separation which was reinforced by the work of boosters.[668] Yet boosters also adapted their selling visions, shifting away from stressing industrious labour by migrants of all classes and towards investor-type settlers who expected to employ field labourers.

The free labour ideology of self-directed industry thus evolved into more stridently colonialist notions of Anglo-American developers who – while not performing field labour in the "hot" summers of Imperial Valley or the Everglades – remained the vital agents behind the landed expansions which converted "worthlessness to wealth".[669] Their skill and ambition, if not their sweat and brawn, were the distinctly "American" traits which furthered commercial growth in Southern California and peninsular Florida. The key to progress in the semi-tropical states was the "human effort to control or subject" nature, which implicitly included ethnic and racial minorities – "tropical races" who Anglo-Americans continued to view as close to nature and in need of judicious oversight. As John Gifford wrote in 1909, tropical "regions which are so richly supplied with nature's gifts are, strange to say, the very spots which are still undeveloped, while those regions where the most is supplied by the hand of man, as in California and Florida, have progressed the

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[667] Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 9-28.

[668] Street, *Beasts of the Field*, p. xviii.

[669] "From Desert to Garden", *California Homeseeker*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April 1902), pp. 256-271 [SFPL].

most. The very luxuriance of many tropical regions is their main drawback."[670] The reclamation of Imperial Valley and the Everglades thus reaffirmed the booster narratives of Anglo-American "conquest" of semi-tropical California and Florida.

Desert to Garden: Irrigation and California's Imperial Valley

In his 1895 text on the future irrigation of the West, *The Conquest of Arid America*, William E. Smythe wrote, "Probably the public is more familiar with the orange-colonies of southern California than with any other institutions in the arid West."[671] This reflected the vigorous promotion of semi-tropical California over the previous generation, with Riverside, in particular, renowned for its irrigated groves and prosperous agriculture, in which "landownings are divided into five-and-ten-acre lots," "the homes are a long succession of beautiful country villas, surrounded by lawns, trees, and glowing flower-beds," and "the civic institutions are fully equal to the highest New England standard." Although increasingly expensive in land terms, Southern California's citrus colonies symbolised a benign alternative to an East of "overgrown cities and overcrowded industries" in the midst of widespread unemployment and labour marches. Writing two years after Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, Smythe saw in the present strife the shadow of the closed frontier. Since "the material greatness of the United States is the fruit of a policy of peaceful conquest over the resources of a virgin continent," Americans faced distressingly uncertain times in which "the splendour of national prosperity pales in the grim presence of national stagnation." Thoroughly optimistic in his outlook, however,

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[670] John Gifford, "Fruit Quality in Tropical Florida; What it is and How to Make it", *Miami News* (September 28, 1909), p. 30.

[671] William E. Smythe, "The Conquest of Arid America", *Century*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (May 1895), pp. 94-95.

Smythe envisaged man-made frontiers which could remedy these industrial wrongs and provide new formation narratives for Americans. Thus he pondered "how the American character will be modified and transformed when millions of people shall have finally made their homes in the arid regions, under conditions as yet untried by Anglo-Saxon men."[672]

Southern California was an exception. Home of the 1887 Wright Act which created local irrigation districts controlled by landowners, the region already provided "an extreme illustration of the value of water in an arid country" – although Smythe warned that its natural conditions were unique. The "experiences" of Colorado and Utah, he felt, were more applicable to most arid Western lands "because southern California is semi-tropical and therefore not fairly representative of average possibilities."[673] It was still an inspiring model, however. From sparse irrigation in 1870, which earlier American residents largely disdained as an expensive luxury, Southern California experienced an irrigation boom as new settlers saw reliable water access as crucial to agricultural success and set about harnessing river and underground sources.[674] Some 200,000 acres were irrigated in 1878, and that number increased by 500 percent to 1,004,223 acres by 1890.[675] "Irrigating canals or ditches are already to be seen carrying water…in every direction through the valleys," wrote I. N. Hoag of the California Immigration Commission; "and wherever this water is used on the land, the once apparently worthless desert is made to bloom and blossom like

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[672] Smythe, "Conquest of Arid America," pp. 94-95.

[673] Ibid, p. 95.

[674] "Irrigation in Semi-Tropical Countries", *Daily Alta California* (May 8, 1872), p. 2.

[675] Donald J. Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness: The Irrigation Crusade in California and the West, 1850-1931* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 284.

the rose."[676] The effects were evident in California's growing "orange empire".[677] The number of bearing orange trees increased from 41,000 in 1870, to 280,000 in 1880, to 1.2 million in 1890, with California a close second to Florida in total output.[678]

Aspects of population growth, moreover, correlated with irrigation and vice versa. Settlers headed in far greater numbers than before to newly-irrigated areas in the southern part of the state. For example, the 1870 population of seven Northern and Central California counties (Alpine, Calaveras, Del Norte, El Dorado, Marin, Mendocino, and San Luis Obispo) was 41,131 – virtually the equivalent (40,849) of seven more southern counties (Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Merced, San Bernardino, San Diego, Tulare).[679] By 1890, the first group of counties, still largely non-irrigated, had hardly grown to 67,778 residents; the latter group, where irrigation was most widely practised in the state, had 250,283 inhabitants. San Diego County, one of the most remote southern counties, changed dramatically with a new railroad link and irrigated lands rising from 5,000 to 35,000 acres.[680] Owners of large tracts there, the Pacific Coast Land Bureau explained how 30,000 people were "now living where but a few years ago the world thought there was nothing but

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[676] I. N. Hoag, *California, The Cornucopia of the World* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1883), p. 25 [BL].

[677] Douglas C. Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

[678] Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness*, p. 283.

[679] Harry Ellington Brook, *Irrigation in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Printing Company, 1893), pp. 16-19 [CHS].

[680] Ibid, p. 19.

a fifth rate cattle range, if anything."[681] The California State Board of Trade thus asserted in its literature that "immigration [was] a corollary of irrigation," and that "the two elements" of "horticulture and irrigation" were "the prime factors in the progress of the State in material wealth."[682]

This progress in "material wealth" included sharp rises in land values in many irrigated counties. Such consequences had been predicted. In 1883 the *Rural Californian* produced an "emigration paper" which stated, "We believe – no panic or calamity interposing – that in the next ten years it will be very difficult to buy any desirable lands with water, suitable for orange or raisin growing, in Southern California, for less than $1000 per acre."[683] Although self-serving and somewhat overblown, these claims were proving prescient by the 1890s. A pamphlet distributed at the World's Fair thus noted how Easterners held "a general impression that Southern California land is so expensive as to be beyond the reach of all but the well-to-do."[684] At $100 to $200 per acre – as were the prices quoted by the Semi-Tropic Land and Water Company of Rialto, California, in 1890 – such impressions were rooted in reality.

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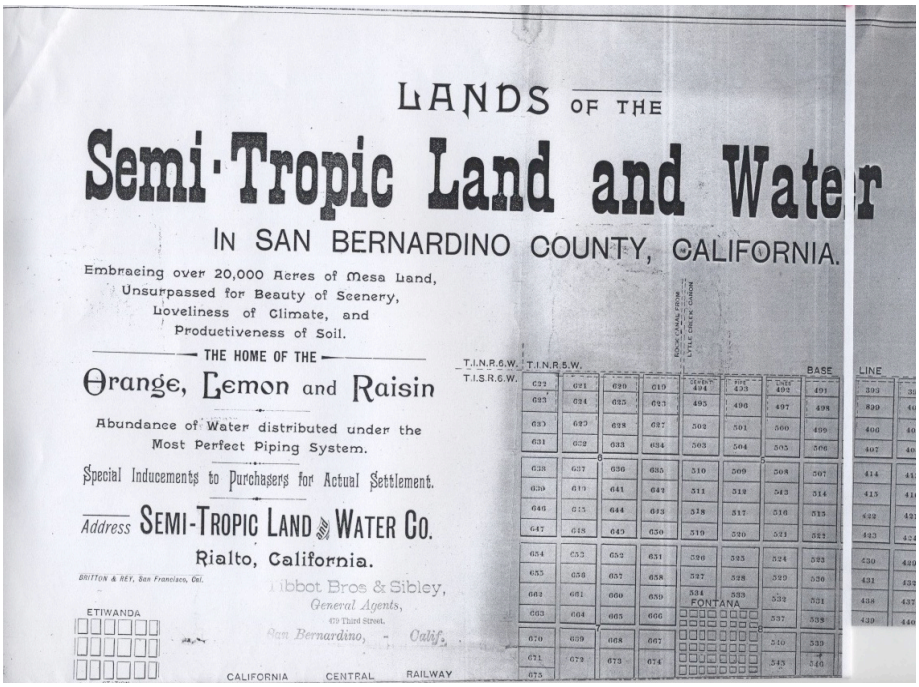
[681] *Semi-Tropic California – San Diego County* (San Francisco: Pacific Coast Land Bureau, 1891), p. 5 [UCSD].

[682] *California Handbook with State and County Maps* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1892), p. 113. *Report of the Immigration Committee of the California State Board of Trade* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1895), p. 6 [CSL].

[683] *Rural Californian* [Emigration Paper] (January 1883), np [BL]. The quotation was reproduced in *Southern California – Pomona Illustrated and Described* (Pomona: Pomona Land and Water Company, 1885), p. 37 [BrL].

[684] Brook, *Land of Sunshine*, p. 15.

Fig. 4.1 – ***Map of the Semi-Tropic Land and Water Company*** **(1890)** [BL][685]



If land prices varied tremendously – depending on location, soil and water supply – semi-tropical agricultural tracts were invariably more expensive. In 1893 un-irrigated land for grain, alfalfa, or deciduous fruits cost £30 to £100 per acre while quality irrigated citrus land sold for not less than $250 per acre.[686]

To an extent, this imperilled the republican narratives embedded in the promotion of semi-tropical agriculture, since capital became a virtual prerequisite for settlers. Some promoters acknowledged as much. "Great advances in land values certainly bring great advantages," a rural writer commented, "but they also produce results which are detrimental to the men of comparatively small means who are seeking homes. And this

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[685] *Lands of the Semi-Tropic Land and Water Company, San Bernardino County, California* [Map] (San Francisco: Britton & Rey, 1890) [BL].

[686] Brook, *Land of Sunshine*, p. 15.

class form the bone and sinew of the population."[687] Land promoters, however, also acquiesced to rising land values as confirmation of their region's agricultural exceptionalism and improvement. Many were landowners who benefitted from higher prices and preferred settlers from wealthier backgrounds. As early as 1886, the newly-formed Southern California Immigration Association warned, "While not disposed to discourage the immigration of those who have some means and evince a disposition to avail themselves of the opportunities afforded by a new country, the association does not hold out flattering inducements in favour of Southern California as a 'poor man's country'."[688] Horticulture was becoming a lucrative enterprise by the mid-1890s, when California's orange crop brought $3,000,000 into the state.[689] The cooperative formation in 1893 of the Southern California Fruit Growers' Exchange gave greater financial clout to producers, who strived for further innovations in crop protection, freight rates, refrigerated cars, and fruit distribution. Los Angeles promoter Harry Ellington Brook justified high land prices with the logic that "a man can do better on ten acres here than on 160 acres in the East," even adding that "ten acres of Southern California land ought to be cheap at ten times the price of Eastern land, with out climate in the bargain."[690] The market niche of semi-tropical agriculture had thus been passed on to its real estate prices.

Even so, promoters sustained republican visions of Southern California as a society different from the industrial Northeast. Citrus-producing Riverside, with lands priced at hundreds of dollars an acre, was featured frequently in *Sunset* magazine, a monthly started

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[687] "A Thrifty and Progressive Settlement", *Rural Californian* (November 1886), np [CSL].

[688] "Southern California Immigration Association", *Los Angeles Times* (January 1886), np [CSL Scrapbooks].

[689] Owen Capelle, "A Famous Festival", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (March 1895), p. 73.

[690] Brook, *Land of Sunshine*, pp. 15-18.

by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1898 to promote its Western domain to settlers and tourists. "Riverside is the richest city in the world, has the largest per capita income," wrote J. P. Baumgartner. "Yet it has no millionaires and no paupers." On the contrary, Riverside possessed "an even and equitable distribution of wealth naturally incident to the character of the industries in which the people are engaged, resulting in almost ideal social conditions."[691] The rising wealth of semi-tropical agriculture was thus cast as an "equitable" evolution, sustained by the fructifying and subdividing process of irrigation, which converted arid deserts into middle-class communities. Riverside's chamber of commerce explained how, prior to the arrival of Midwesterners, the region had been "a possible paradise treeless and barren, without life or beauty – a desert".[692] In reality there had been "life" in the region, as the chamber acknowledged: "Their distant neighbours [were] Spaniards and Indians," but "their own habitations [were] the first to be made by a white man," whose enterprise was manifest in orange groves and gardens of "palm and pomegranate, olive, persimmon and fig," all of which gave a "semi-tropical richness" to the surroundings. The land had thus been transformed "from a desert waste to a garden, from a voiceless spot to a peopled plain, from a dream to realisation."[693]

Racial conquest became fixed into the irrigation imagery. At the International Irrigation Congress held in Los Angeles in 1893, Brook declared, "Irrigation has here made a country such as can be seen nowhere else, which supports in comfort, and even luxury, more people to the acre than the soil supports in any other country peopled by the Anglo-

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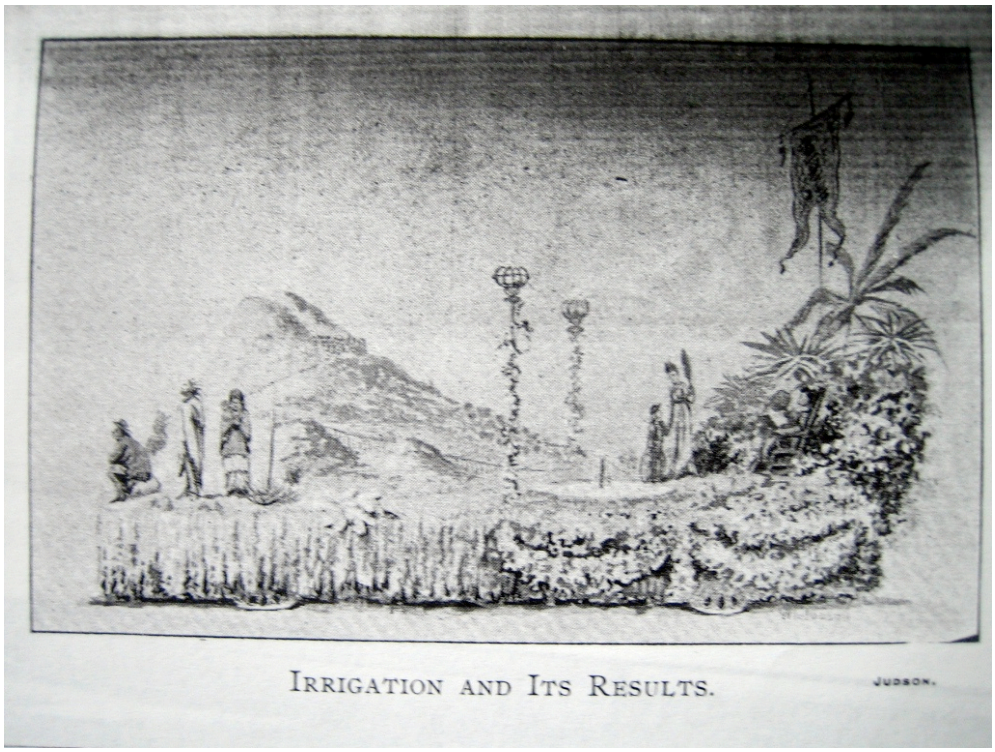
[691] J. P. Baumgartner, "Riverside", *Sunset*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (December 1899), p. 75.

[692] Alla Aldrich Clarke, "In Orange Land – Riverside" [Riverside Chamber of Commerce essay competition winner], *Sunset*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (January 1902), p. 113.

[693] Ibid, pp. 113-115.

Saxon race."[694] The message was conveyed again by a cartoon distributed at the 1893 World's Fair, entitled "Irrigation and Its Results" and depicting an environmental conversion from frontier desert to garden civilisation. The image was divided down the middle by a lamppost, on the left of which stood two Native Americans and a cigarette-smoking cowboy, figures who inhabited a barren landscape with a single cactus; on the right side were two white women and a little girl, who relaxed in a verdant garden beneath a banner saying "Irrigation":

Fig. 4.2 – *Irrigation and Its Results* cartoon (1893) [UCLA][695]



[694] Brook, *Irrigation in Southern California*, p. 16.

[695] "Irrigation and Its Results" cartoon in Harry Ellington Brook, *The County and City of Los Angeles in Southern California* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror Company, 1893), np [UCLA].

The social and racial "results" of reclamation were clear: Anglos (notably, women and children) rested in a fertile landscape, separated from the "primitive" desert of Indians and ranchers. Garden imagery – symbolising human fertility and controlled breeding – was prominent in the growing eugenic movement, which saw Southern California as an ideal land for racial uplift.[696] More directly, such images made irrigation into a signifier of "peaceful" Anglo-American conquest. In his 1899 guidebook published by the Santa Fe Railroad, Charles Keeler thus wrote of Riverside, "In this section as in so many other districts of Southern California, which were found a desert occupied by a scanty, unprogressive [sic] Mexican population, and which have been made by Saxon industry perennial gardens of verdure and bloom, the irrigating ditch has been the magic wand of transformation."[697]

Land reclamation fed into colonialist ideas of human reclamation, as Anglo-Americans in Southern California strived to uplift those "inferior" natives who had been incapable of this "transformation" alone. In 1901 the Sherman Institute was founded in Riverside, a boarding school for Native Americans designed to re-educate them for the purpose of integration into American society (similar "Americanisation" programmes were set up to assimilate Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos in Progressive Era California).[698] The project was cited to counter national criticism of white treatment of

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[696] Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), p. 19.

[697] Charles A. Keeler, *Southern California* (Los Angeles: Passenger Department, Santa Fe Railroad, 1899), p. 72 [CSL].

[698] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, p. 20.

Indians.[699] *Sunset* magazine declared, "The most striking proof that there still lurks in the national consciousness a keen sense of moral obligation lies in the work which the government is doing to make useful citizens of the American Indians and to raise them to a place of intelligence whereon they may compete successfully with their Anglo-Saxon brothers."[700] "Useful citizens" meant industrious Indians who contributed to Anglo conceptions of progress. Native customs and languages were thus suppressed by the Institute which stressed education in industrial and service trades. An Indian agent reported of Native American children attending Sherman, "They cannot help but gain some ideas, when they go to Riverside or other thrifty towns, by seeing what industry can accomplish."[701] The institute also became a promotional site. "Pleasure-seekers" to Riverside were encouraged to visit not only the "fifty-six square miles of orchards within the city limits" but also the "Sherman Institute – the Carlisle Indian School of the Pacific".[702] In that sense, it represented an anthropomorphic extension of the irrigation narrative. Groups of "progressive" whites took it upon themselves to convert Native Americans who, like desert lands, would "be trained in the spirit of Americanism, and, so far as possible,…be imbued with the energy and industry…that has made America the greatest nation."[703]

For Southern California promoters, the transformation of Riverside and other irrigated sections augured well for the potential of interior deserts such as the Mojave and

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[699] David Starr Jordan, "Helping the Indians", *Sunset*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (January 1909), p. 57.

[700] C. W. Barton, "Riverside's New Indian School", *Sunset*, Vol. 7, No. 6 (October 1901), np.

[701] Quotation in Sackman, *Orange Empire*, p. 20.

[702] Clarke, "In Orange Land", pp. 117-118.

[703] Barton, "Riverside's New Indian School", np.

Colorado basins. Hotter and drier than the coastal and foothill counties, these inland valleys had been largely overlooked by developers during the 1880s boom, while the depression of the 1890s halted irrigation plans.[704] They were un-reclaimed and uninhabited but for small numbers of Native Americans. Promoters continued to foster expansive visions, however. An 1893 pamphlet espoused, "Twenty years ago, Riverside, the centre of California orange production, was a barren, sandy, and desert waste. Twenty years hence, the Mojave and Colorado basins will support a dense population. Water will be the magic element to effect this marvellous change."[705] William E. Smythe – hailing in 1896 "the men of the southern valleys" who through irrigation had achieved a "conquest of the desert…[and] made the small farm unit supreme" – pointed to the Colorado Desert as a future site for expansion.[706] As economic conditions improved after 1898, California saw an 18.2% increase in irrigated lands in four years.[707]

Part of the Colorado basin, the Salton Sink, as it was then known, was a focal point for this new irrigation. The Sink was renamed – branded – "Imperial Valley" by the private California Development Company, which, in the late 1890s, "audaciously asserted an unauthorized water right" to the Colorado River and set out to irrigate, subdivide and sell

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[704] In the 1880s, some boosters recognised the semi-tropical potential of these interior deserts, with J. P. Widney writing that the valley system at the bottom of the Colorado River "may be irrigated and made productive" and "for sugar-cane and other semi-tropic agricultural products, has probably no equal in North America": Walter Lindley & J. P. Widney, *California of the South* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1888), p. 27 [CSL].

[705] Brook, *Land of Sunshine*, p. 6.

[706] William E. Smythe, "Our Great Pacific Commonwealth", *Century*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (December 1896), pp. 300-307.

[707] "Irrigation in California", *Sunset*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (August 1904), p. 382.

valley lands.[708] Located in Southeastern California, Imperial Valley consisted of an area of desert somewhat larger than the State of Delaware: a below-sea-level basin forty miles by sixty with an average yearly rainfall of three inches.[709] As one scholar has written, "Imperial Valley is a desert pit or oven."[710] It also contained a potentially irrigable area of over 400,000 acres, which gripped the imagination of Smythe on a 1900 tour reported in *Sunset*. Once reclaimed, Smythe wrote, the Colorado Desert would become "a new civilisation, and its cornerstone…the little farm," which was "another of the precious gifts of irrigation".[711] The valley would be like Riverside – a dense country of "independent" settlers who would "realise…all the best possibilities of country and of town life"; unlike Riverside, however, where prices ran up to $300 per acre, these lands would be affordable for the average American, at $10 to $15 per acre with a perpetual water right. "There are thousands of eastern people who desire to live in California, and are only prevented from doing so by the mistaken idea that all land in this country is high-priced," he wrote. A community of small, irrigated farms, Imperial Valley would represent "the twentieth century Damascus, [but] fairer than that in the Syrian desert," since it was "instinct with the life of a new time and blessed with American liberty."[712]

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[708] Richard J. Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 226-7.

[709] Carey McWilliams, *California – The Great Exception* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949), pp. 301-303.

[710] Ibid, p. 301.

[711] William E. Smythe, "An International Wedding", *Sunset*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (October 1900), p. 299.

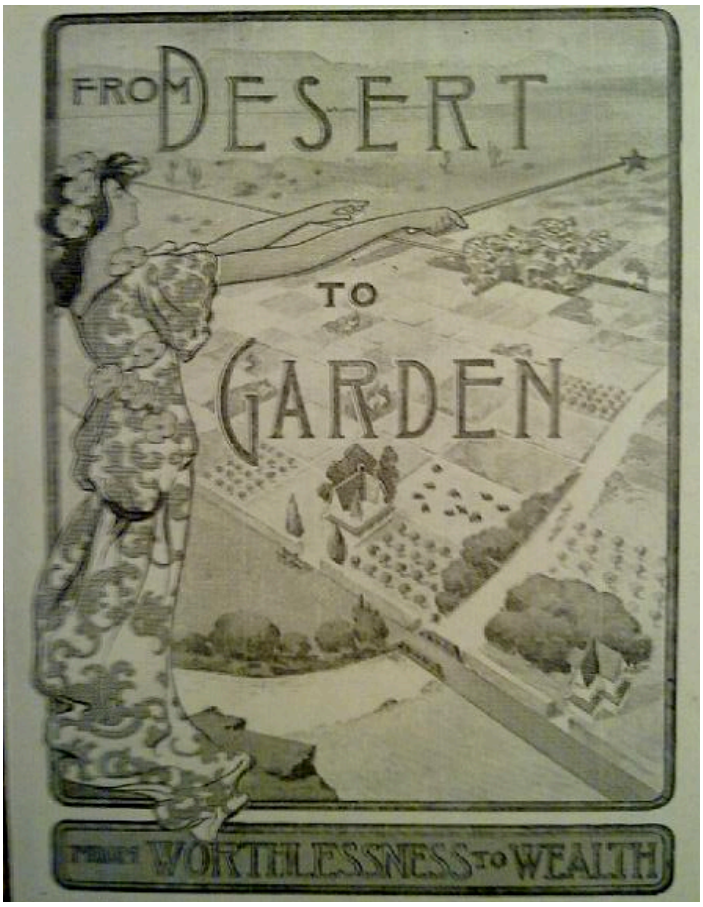
[712] Ibid, pp. 286-300.

The California Development Company and its colonising body, the Imperial Land Company, promoted the reclamation project in magazines and land pamphlets: Imperial Valley as the new frontier for "men of limited means, who would be very glad to secure a tract of good, fertile land," with a water right and a route to independence.[713] The towns of Imperial and Calexico were founded, schools were opened, and farms were laid out. Landowners began publishing the *Imperial Valley Press* and in 1903 cited a recent United States Geological Survey that proclaimed the suitability of the valley for irrigation works just like those "built by the British and…now in operation on the Nile." With its "semi-tropical climate" and a "diversity of agricultural products," Imperial Valley promised "among the richest lands in the whole irrigated West"; once the Colorado River was "brought under…control" there would "be developed…an occidental Egypt within [California's] domain."[714] The Imperial Land Company depicted a lady, irrigation incarnate, whose wand converted "Desert to Garden":

[713] "From Desert to Garden", *California Homeseeker*, p. 256.

[714] "Irrigation Possibilities of the Colorado River", *Imperial Valley Press* (January 24, 1903), p. 8.

Fig. 4.3 – *From Desert to Garden* image (1902) [SFPL][715]



For the inherently speculative California Development Company, however, the "magical" turning of this "desert pit" proved an overwhelming task: "The scale was too vast, the commitments too immense, the problems too enormous".[716] In 1904, with numerous cuts into its banks, the Colorado River flooded across the valley. Facing bankruptcy, the private developers were forced to turn to the Southern Pacific Railroad for assistance. Possessing land interests and railroad lines in the area, the Southern Pacific took over control and launched a massive, protracted damming operation which, after three

[715] "From Desert to Garden", *California Homeseeker*, np.

[716] McWilliams, *California*, p. 302

years, prevented the river from destroying the entire reclamation project.[717] The selling of Imperial Valley thus resumed under the far steadier guidance of the Southern Pacific Company, which had by then been promoting Southern California as "semi-tropical" for thirty years.

Sunset magazine and its Home-seeker's Bureau (both organs of the Southern Pacific) led the selling of Imperial Valley. The Southern Pacific's Passenger Company already published *Semi-Tropic California*, a pamphlet which included alluring descriptions of other newly-reclaimed desert colonies, like Indio, which "originally…had nothing of outward appearance to redeem it," but now stood as proof of "how it is possible to transform a barren desert into an Eden".[718] The "dry" semi-tropicality of Southern California was paramount, with Indio having been a "void of vegetation and other forms of life" despite possessing a "nearly tropical" climate. Once irrigated, fertility was matched by healthfulness. "The atmosphere, baked perfectly dry over the parched surface of the desert, and all forms of decomposition burned out, is absolutely dry and pure." Indio had become "a scene of dense tropical growth," just as Salton "needs no greater incentive than water to rival the tropics in productiveness."[719] For Otis B. Tout of the Sunset Magazine Home-seekers' Bureau, Imperial Valley represented a culmination of this irrigated conquest, which had been "a large factor in the [state's] prosperity…, transforming the face of the

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[717] Orsi, *Sunset Limited*, pp. 226-237.

[718] A. D. Shepard [General Passenger Agent, Southern Pacific Company], *Semi-Tropic California* (San Francisco: Southern Pacific Company, ~1898), p. 11 [BL].

[719] Ibid, pp. 11-22.

country" and making plausible the present "dreams of making the [Colorado] desert blossom".[720]

Promoters attributed the fructifying of Imperial Valley to Anglo-American skill and vision. "In January, 1901, there was not a living white man on all the desert waste," Tout wrote; another pamphlet stressed that the region had been one of "drought and barrenness in which only a few Indians roamed, finding scanty subsistence by a rude kind of agriculture in spots along the river moistened by the overflow."[721] An influx of white settlers brought an end to this "rude kind of agriculture". By 1908 nearly 300,000 acres in Imperial Valley were under cultivation and products worth over $2 million were exported. Fifteen thousand people were living from Indio to Calexico, and Imperial County was organised into a body politic.[722] In 1910 the *Los Angeles Times* organised an excursion of "homeseekers" to Imperial County who were "greatly impressed" with the "American Nile Valley".[723] The Southern Pacific sold 44,000 acres of valley land to a syndicate of 200 Los Angeles businessmen who then marketed these as prime citrus and cotton farms.[724] Pamphlets showed a green landscape of semi-tropic farms:

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[720] Otis B. Tout, *Imperial Valley, California* (San Francisco: Sunset Magazine Homeseekers' Bureau, 1907), p. 3 [SFPL].

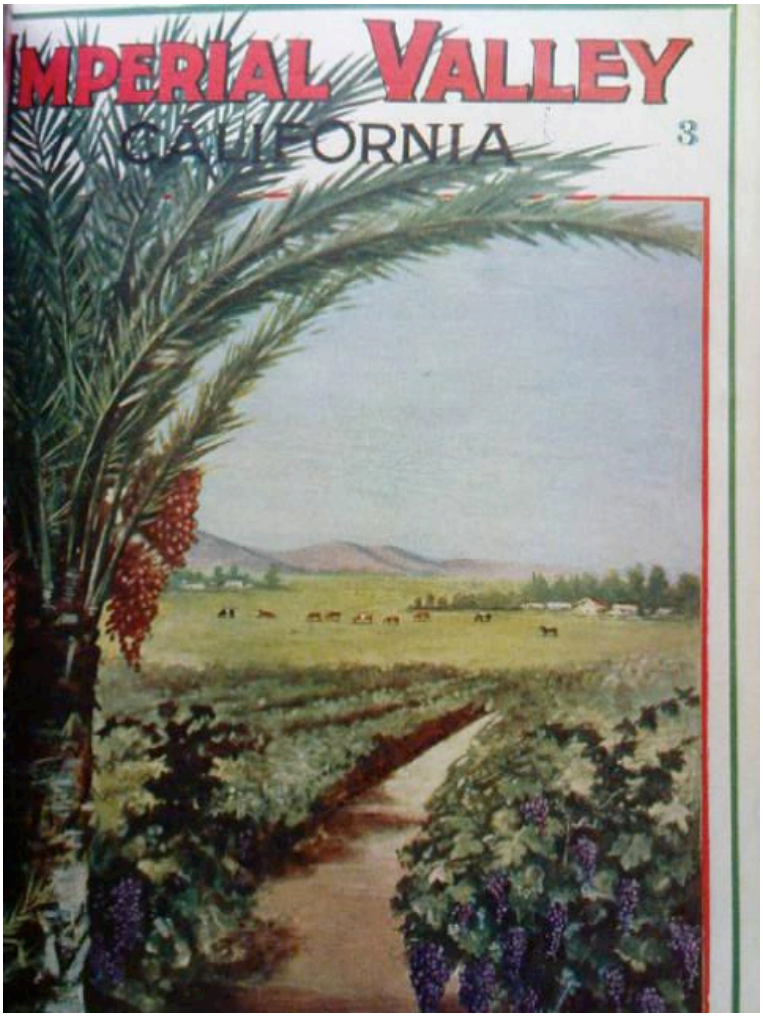
[721] Wells, *California for the Settler*, p. 43.

[722] Charles S. Aiken, "The Surprise of the Desert", *Sunset*, Vol. 21, No. 5 (September 1908), p. 3.

[723] Sam G. Austin, "True Appreciation of 'American Nile Valley'", *Los Angeles Times* (April 24, 1910), p. 7.

[724] "Southern Pacific Sells Big Tract", *New York Times* (January 18, 1914), p. 25.

Fig. 4.4 – *Imperial Valley, California* Cover (1907) [SFPL][725]



The path down the middle of the picture invited the reader to enter the newly-reclaimed fields where, Tout wrote, "what a man can do to better his condition will be measured chiefly by his energy and his ability." Republicanism would flourish in Imperial Valley because it was "distinctly a farming region" – with "agriculture…the basis of abiding

[725] Cover of Tout, *Imperial Valley, California*.

prosperity for towns" – and thus an extension of the rural prosperity of semi-tropical California.[726]

In reality, Imperial Valley exemplified the growing dominance of agribusiness in Southern California. Intensive specialised agriculture on high-yield lands made capital and labour costs increasingly vital, as the scientific growing and marketing of crops, in practice, fundamentally overshadowed older notions of living on and working one's own land. The state's booming irrigated agricultural sectors featured a stark and often racialised division between land ownership and field labour. As Gilbert G. Gonzales writes, in Progressive Era Southern California "the individual grower…functioned as a businessman involved more with a bureaucratic cooperative and less with actual farming itself," with the hand-picking and packing of fruits invariably "reserved for other nationalities, and, to a lesser extent, poor Anglo-Americans."[727]

Imperial Valley hosted interlinked hierarchies of race and class which existed in tandem with the republican visions. Few land buyers and owners in the valley actually stayed to work their fields, under desert heat, when they could afford to pay someone else to – migrant labourers, especially Mexicans who crossed over the border, travelled from harvest to harvest, and worked for low wages.[728] Local Native Americans also provided a cheap workforce for white landowners. Boosters like Smythe noted that local Indians "will make a useful class of labourers when the country is developed," thereby giving different

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[726] Tout, *Imperial Valley*, pp. 5-11.

[727] Gilbert Gonzales, *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 25.

[728] McWilliams, *California*, p. 302.

meanings to their pronouncements of Imperial Valley as "The American Nile".[729] In the same pages *Sunset* published agrarian depictions of Imperial Valley and articles which highlighted the non-white labour available to white landowners. Prolific irrigation booster A. J. Wells thus championed the social and economic autonomy awaiting settlers on reclaimed lands but, elsewhere, praised the employment of California's Native Americans on farms and "in the homes of the whites" as an uplifting system preferable to the creation of reservations which developed the "yellow streak" in Indians who would be "swept out of existence by the law of the survival of the strongest."[730] An advocate of Imperial's cotton-producing potential, meanwhile, promoted the valley as "just like Dixie Land".[731] White settler-landowners could prosper by employing non-white labourers at inexpensive wages. "Indians and Mexicans are not highly satisfactory or efficient farm hands, but they can be had in large bands in the valley; they work cheaply, and in the end, the planters may find it possible to employ them profitably," he wrote. "Japanese can be had, but they demand high wages and are exceedingly independent and intractable…The picturesque negro, with his music and drollery,…it is thought…may be brought into the valley in the future."[732] Japanese "independence" – or that of any non-white labour force – was conceived of as an impediment to the prosperous independence of white settlers who were creating "a new civilisation" with "its cornerstone…the little farm".[733] California's legacies of racial conquest thus fed into optimistic visions of "money farming" in Imperial Valley, where, as

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[729] Smythe, "An International Wedding", p. 299.

[730] A. J. Wells, "Helping the Indian", *Sunset*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (May 1907), pp. 89-90.

[731] Wilbur Jay Hall, "Just Like Dixie Land", *Sunset*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (February 1910), pp. 173-175.

[732] Ibid, p. 175.

[733] Smythe, "An International Wedding", p. 299.

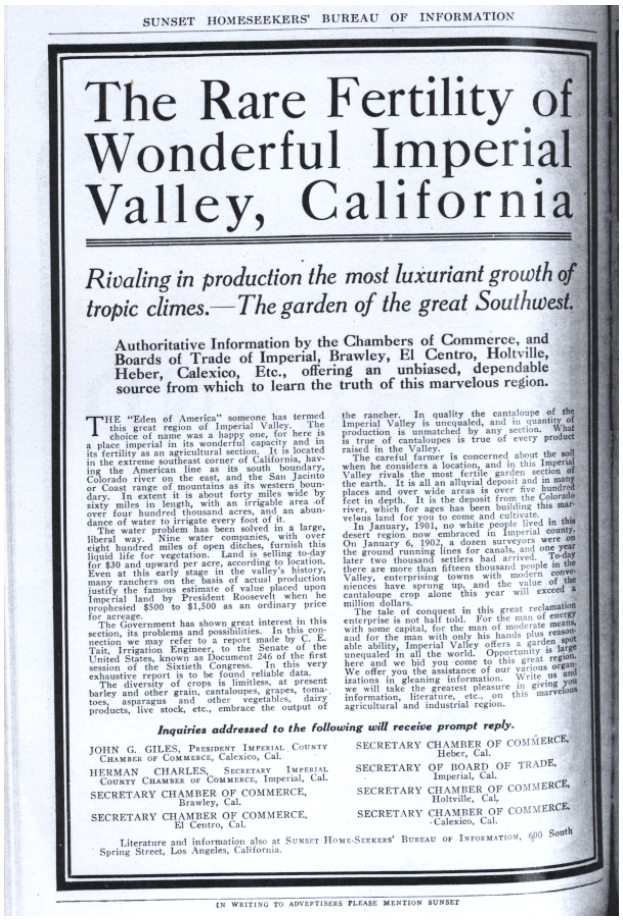
Tout declared, "the truth of to-day is pale compared with the promise of tomorrow."[734] Indeed: by 1914, Imperial Valley was producing 16,500 acres of cotton, a crop worth $1.4 million which was picked by migrant workers. Boosters contained their presence within visions which instead hailed, in Donald Worster's words, the "entrepreneurial Americans [who] were the master race come at last to command the desert."[735]

As in coastal and foothill counties in earlier decades, the semi-tropical fertility of Imperial Valley constituted the crucial selling point – its unique rewards overrode the harsh labour realities. Eight chambers of commerce in the county, formed as a means of raising land values and attracting more settlers, thus advertised the "Rare Fertility of Wonderful Imperial Valley…Rivaling in production the most luxuriant growth of tropic climes – The garden of the great Southwest":

[734] Tout, *Imperial Valley, California*, p. 5.

[735] "Cotton on Pacific Coast", *New York Times* (June 26, 1914), p. 17. Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), p. 198

Fig. 4.5 – *Imperial Valley* advertisement in *Sunset* magazine (1908)[736]



SUNSET HOMESEEKERS' BUREAU OF INFORMATION

The Rare Fertility of Wonderful Imperial Valley, California

Rivaling in production the most luxuriant growth of tropic climes.—The garden of the great Southwest.

Authoritative Information by the Chambers of Commerce, and Boards of Trade of Imperial, Brawley, El Centro, Holtville, Heber, Calexico, Etc., offering an unbiased, dependable source from which to learn the truth of this marvelous region.

THE "Eden of America" someone has termed this great region of Imperial Valley. The choice of name was a happy one, for here is a place imperial in its wonderful capacity and in its fertility as an agricultural section. It is located in the extreme southeast corner of California, having the American line as its south boundary, Colorado river on the east, and the San Jacinto or Coast range of mountains as its western boundary. In extent it is about forty miles wide by sixty miles in length, with an irrigable area of over four hundred thousand acres, and an abundance of water to irrigate every foot of it.

The water problem has been solved in a large, liberal way. Nine water companies, with over eight hundred miles of open ditches, furnish this liquid life for vegetation. Land is selling to-day for $30 and upward per acre, according to location. Even at this early stage in the valley's history, many ranchers on the basis of actual production justify the famous estimate of value placed upon Imperial land by President Roosevelt when he prophesied $500 to $1,500 as an ordinary price for acreage.

The Government has shown great interest in this section, its problems and possibilities. In this connection we may refer to a report made by C. E. Tait, Irrigation Engineer, to the Senate of the United States, known as Document 246 of the first session of the Sixtieth Congress. In this very exhaustive report is to be found reliable data.

The diversity of crops is limitless, at present barley and other grain, cantaloupes, grapes, tomatoes, asparagus and other vegetables, dairy products, live stock, etc., embrace the output of the rancher. In quality the cantaloupe of the Imperial Valley is unequaled, and in quantity of production is unmatched by any section. What is true of cantaloupes is true of every product raised in the Valley.

The careful farmer is concerned about the soil when he considers a location, and in this Imperial Valley rivals the most fertile garden section of the earth. It is all an allurial deposit and in many places and over wide areas is over five hundred feet in depth. It is the deposit from the Colorado river, which for ages has been building this marvelous land for you to come and cultivate.

In January, 1901, no white people lived in this desert region now embraced in Imperial county. On January 6, 1902, a dozen surveyors were on the ground running lines for canals, and one year later two thousand settlers had arrived. To-day there are more than fifteen thousand people in the Valley, enterprising towns with modern conveniences have sprung up, and the value of the cantaloupe crop alone this year will exceed a million dollars.

The tale of conquest in this great reclamation enterprise is not half told. For the man of energy with some capital, for the man of moderate means, and for the man with only his hands plus reasonable ability, Imperial Valley offers a garden spot unequaled in all the world. Opportunity is large here and we bid you come to this great region. We offer you the assistance of our various organizations in gleaning information. Write us and we will take the greatest pleasure in giving you information, literature, etc., on this marvelous agricultural and industrial region.

Inquiries addressed to the following will receive prompt reply.

JOHN G. GILES, President Imperial County Chamber of Commerce, Calexico, Cal.

HERMAN CHARLES, Secretary Imperial County Chamber of Commerce, Imperial, Cal.

SECRETARY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, Brawley, Cal.

SECRETARY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, El Centro, Cal.

SECRETARY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, Heber, Cal.

SECRETARY OF BOARD OF TRADE, Imperial, Cal.

SECRETARY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, Holtville, Cal.

SECRETARY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, Calexico, Cal.

Literature and information also at Sunset Home-Seekers' Bureau of Information, 600 South Spring Street, Los Angeles, California.

IN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS PLEASE MENTION SUNSET

"This section of the Golden State is as rich as the Valley of the Nile," the advertisement explained, and "with plenty of water and wafted by the warm breezes of a semi-tropical climate, it produces twelve crops per year," including cantaloupes, alfalfa, citrus, tomatoes, and cotton.[737] Calling to settlers to purchase lands for $30 and upward per acre, the advertisement promised: "The tale of conquest in this great reclamation enterprise is not half told."[738] But a different kind of conquest had already been achieved. As A. J. Wells

[736] Advertisement for "Imperial Valley", *Sunset*, Vol. 21, No. 5 (September 1908), p. 11.

[737] Advertisement for "Imperial Valley – The Egypt of America" in Ibid, p. 12.

[738] Advertisement for "Imperial Valley", p. 11.

cheered in 1914, "The old prejudice against the desert is gone, as with water it puts on another face and becomes amazingly productive."[739] Although divided between Anglo landowners and migrant labourers, Imperial Valley was sold as "Land of Promise Fulfilled" and the ideal of irrigated and republican California.[740] A reclamation booster thus reported "the miracle-story of Imperial Valley," which told of "how a corner of the country God appeared to have forgotten was transfigured by the addition of the two elements which it needed to make it worth remembering – water and good society."[741]

Swamp to Garden: Drainage and Florida's Everglades

As Southern California boosters wrestled with the spectre of desert, Florida promoters confronted that of "impregnable and worthless swamps, reeking with miasma and pestilential vapours".[742] This vision of peninsular Florida tied its natural environment to disease, lethargy, and wastelands: "a place of swamps and marshes and deadly fevers, not in any degree to be connected with agricultural pursuits, healthful residence, or the enjoyments of prosperity".[743] California promoters occasionally contributed to this

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[739] Wells, *California for the Settler*, p. 47.

[740] "Imperial County, Land of Promise Fulfilled", *Los Angeles Times* (January 1, 1916), p. 17. Bourdon Wilson, "Imperial Valley the Ideal", *Sunset*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (December 1910), pp. 710-711.

[741] Walter V. Woehlke, "The Land of Before-and-After: The Miracle-Story of Imperial Valley, California", *Sunset*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (April 1912), pp. 391-398.

[742] *Florida, Its Soil, Climate, Health, Production, Resources and Advantages* (Jacksonville: Florida Land Agency, 1875), p. 2 [UF].

[743] Dennis Eagen, "Report of the Commissioner of Lands and Immigration", *Journal of the Florida House of Representatives, 1874-01-06 – 1874-02-16* (Tallahassee: Florida House of Representatives, 1874), p. 139 [UF].

exaggerated notion. Referring to desperate Floridian attempts to deride California's citrus industry, the *Los Angeles Times* thus ran the headline, "Hark from the Swamps a Doleful Sound."[744] Some Florida boosters found selling material in precisely this contrast. "Many will refer to the vast amount of waste land in Florida in the shape of swamps, everglades,…etc.," wrote Reverend George D. Watson in an 1888 immigration pamphlet; "but Southern California has a far greater waste in its rainless Mojave Desert…[and] would gladly give millions of wealth for a few of the little lakes, tens of thousands of which begerm the territory of Florida."[745] While Florida settlers needed fertiliser, California settlers needed water, the difference being that water in the arid West was "absolutely limited" and expensive, whereas fertiliser from the "muck and peat beds" of Florida was "utterly inexhaustible".[746] Such arguments, however, went against the grain for Americans who feared swamps more than deserts. For decades Florida thus suffered from "the opinion of those who had some knowledge, or thought they did,…that [the] far south was a land of swamps," with "malarial diseases" and "venomous serpents," and a "soil…of no value for agricultural or horticultural purposes".[747]

The dominant reclamation process in peninsular Florida, drainage was both crucial to and evidence of American mastery of the "swamp". Mastery proved slow and expensive,

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[744] "Hark from the Swamps a Doleful Sound", *Los Angeles Times* (January 24, 1894), p. 4.

[745] Rev. George D. Watson, "Florida and Southern California Compared", in J. W. Ashby, *Alachua, the Garden County of Florida – Its Resources and Advantages* (Gainesville: Alachua County Immigration Association, 1888) pp. 8-9 [UF].

[746] Ibid, p. 8.

[747] "The South against the West – What the State of Florida Offers", *FECH*, Vol. 9, No. 10 (October 1907), p. 323.

however, as well as incredibly damaging to the environment. When, in 1850, the federal government granted to the states their "swamp and overflowed" lands for purposes of "drainage and reclamation," Florida received twenty million acres of wetlands, or about sixty percent of its landmass.[748] Reclamation was virtually non-existent for decades, however, proscribed by the Civil War, the turbulence of Reconstruction, and then complex litigation which prevented the Internal Improvement Fund, the body controlling state lands, from granting them to private developers. Beyond railroad links and widely perceived as agriculturally worthless, South Florida was an unwanted American frontier; the population of Dade County in 1890 was just 861.[749] The region was also home to the state's remaining Seminole Indians, whose resistance to removal in the antebellum period was yet blamed by some promoters for the peninsula's relative dearth of white population.[750] Perhaps two hundred Seminoles still lived in Florida, having settled in island dwellings in the Everglades.[751]

The 1881 purchase of four million acres in South Florida by Philadelphia capitalist Hamilton Disston initiated an era of reclamation which challenged Northern objections to the "swamp".[752] The scheme itself had mixed results. The $1 million purchase relieved the

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[748] R. E. Rose [State Chemist], *The Swamp and Overflow Lands of Florida – The Disston Drainage Company and The Disston Purchase: A Reminiscence* (Tallahassee: Rose, 1916), p. 1 [FSU].

[749] *The Fifth Census of the State of Florida* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Agriculture, 1926), p. 16.

[750] *Fruit and Vegetable Growing in Manatee County, Florida* (Norfolk: General Industrial Department, Seaboard Air Line Railway, 1910), p. 5 [UF].

[751] Clay MacCauley, *The Seminole Indians of Florida* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1887), p. 530.

[752] T. Frederick Davis, "The Disston Land Purchase", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 17 No. 3 (1939), pp. 201-211.

Internal Improvement Fund debt and freed the state to attract railroad developers, but also produced controversy, as populist elements charged that corporate interests were being favoured at the expense of homesteaders. The 1893 banking collapse brought the enterprise to a temporary halt and Disston's death precluded its resumption, while the total acreage permanently drained was no more than 50,000 acres.[753] Nevertheless the project gave impetus to the selling of South Florida. After cutting dredges around Lake Okeechobee, the developers demonstrated that the water table could be lowered – albeit at great expense – and that reclaimed lands would produce crops, including winter vegetables and sugarcane.[754] Disston's land companies targeted small-scale settlers to take up lands on sale for $1.25 to $5 per acre, thus raising public awareness of South Florida. A former Deputy Commissioner of the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported a "great…rush of settlers to the 'land of perpetual June' from the North…actually doubling the assessable property, and nearly doubling the population of the State."[755] The total population of five peninsular counties where reclamation was most extensive rose from 24,547 to 45,588 between 1880 and 1885.[756] In rehabilitating the state's credit, moreover, the purchase spurred major railroad construction into the 1890s. The State Department of Agriculture later reported

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[753] Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), p. 278.

[754] James Wood Davidson, *The Florida of To-Day: A Guide for Tourists and Settlers* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1889), p. 68 [UCF].

[755] James H. Foss [Ex-Deputy Commissioner, United States Department of Agriculture], *Florida Facts* (Boston: Rand Avery Company Printers, 1886), p. 3 [UF].

[756] Orange, Polk, Hernando, Hillsborough, and Sumter were the five counties referred to specifically by Disston's Florida Land and Improvement Company. *Florida, Its Climate, Soil and Productions* (New York: Florida Land and Improvement Company, 1881), p. 2 [UF]. *Fifth Census of the State of Florida*, pp. 16-17.

how, after Disston's deal, "Florida entered upon an era of internal development which has made her one of the most prosperous in the South."[757]

The drainage project encouraged boosters to fashion expansive visions of the future transformation of South Florida. State Governor William Bloxham, who oversaw Disston's purchase and was decidedly biased in its favour, was nonetheless justified in describing it as "an advertisement such as we never had…which has called public attention…to our resources and climatic advantages."[758] The reclamation, A. K. McClure wrote, was opening "this whole rich country [which] will offer every inducement of climate, soil, variety of product, easy cultivation, and cheap transportation, through the only really tropical water channels of the Union."[759] An 1885 state guidebook hailed "the reclamation of millions of what are suspected to be the richest lands on the continent, and they constituting wholly the only bit of semi-tropical territory over which our nation's flag waves."[760]

Southward expansion impelled new ambitious plans to reclaim the Everglades, a vast watery prairie of several hundred thousand acres below Lake Okeechobee in South Florida. As an article on Florida drainage recalled, "After a while Northern Florida became more thickly settled, towns sprang up, railroad lines were run along the coasts, and

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[757] B. E. McLin [Florida Commissioner of Agriculture], *Florida – A Pamphlet Descriptive of Its History, Topography, Climate, Soil, Resources, and Natural Advantages, in General and by Counties – Prepared in the Interest of Immigration* (Tallahassee: T. B. Hilson, 1904), p. 14 [UF].

[758] Governor William D. Bloxham, "Governor's Message", *Journal of the Florida House of Representatives, 1883-01-02 – 1883-03-02* (Tallahassee: Florida House of Representatives, 1883), p. 24 [UF].

[759] Col. A. K. McClure, *The South – Its Industrial, Financial, and Political Condition* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1886), p. 18.

[760] C. K. Munroe (ed.), *The Florida Annual – Impartial and Unsectional, 1885* (New York, 1885), p. 38 [UF].

development pressed southward until it paused before the great swamps below Lake Okeechobee."[761] The Everglades held a special place in the American imagination as a wetland of unsurpassed exoticism and wildness. An 1884 guidebook declared, "Much of [South Florida's] territory, known as the Everglades, is an unsurveyed [sic.] and unexplored region, of which the possibilities, in an agricultural or commercial point of view, are as utterly unknown as those of the interior of Africa."[762] Home to only a small number of Seminole Indians, the Everglades represented a new frontier for Florida developers who had succeeded in attracting settlers to the peninsula's central counties.

In 1892 James Ingraham crossed the Everglades with a company of men as part of an exploring mission in regards to their potential drainage.[763] It was "a voyage of discovery," Ingraham recalled, through which the Everglades were for "the first time thoroughly explored by white men."[764] A significant player already in South Florida's development, Ingraham was an appropriate figure for such a mission.[765] At the time, he was president of the South Florida Railway and a close subordinate to Gulf Coast railroad magnate, Henry Plant. Shortly after, he joined Plant's rival, Henry Flagler, as vice-

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[761] "Everglades Drainage", *Christian Science Daily Monitor*, reproduced in *Everglade Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 1911), p. 6 [HMSF].

[762] *Florida Portrayed: Its Sections, Climate, Productions, Resources, Etc.* (London: 'The South' Publishing Company, 1884), p. 34 [UF]. Michael Grunwald, *The Swamp: The Everglades, Florida, and the Politics of Paradise* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), pp. 9-80.

[763] Watt P. Marchman (ed.), "The Ingraham Everglades Exploring Expedition, 1892", *Tequesta*, Vol. 7 (1947), pp. 3-43.

[764] Ingraham, "Drainage of the Everglades", in Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 19.

[765] For a biographical sketch of Ingraham, see Barbara A. Poleo, "James Edmundson Ingraham: Florida, Flagler, and St. Augustine", *El Escribano: St. Augustine Journal of History*, Vol. 40 (2003), pp. 93-118.

president of the Florida East Coast Railway Company, overseeing the promotion of 168,000 acres of land accrued through the company's railroad construction.[766] After his venture into the wetlands, and despite suffering from heat and exhaustion, Ingraham "became convinced of the feasibility of draining the Everglades" and its suitability for settlement.[767] "Though they are yet merely an expansive waste of swamp and lake and jungle," he wrote, "I venture to predict that they will be the location of hundreds of fertile farms" that would "develop into one of the most productive tracts of land in the world."[768]

Natural events influenced this southward press to the Everglades. In the winter of 1894-1895, a freeze struck the peninsula, citrus orchards throughout Central Florida were killed, and the state's orange crop fell to virtually none from six millions boxes (a figure that would not be reached again until 1909).[769] The freeze ended Florida's predominance over California as an orange producer.[770] Indeed, the effects of the frosts were felt warmly in Southern California, where a contributor in the *Los Angeles Times* queried "whether orange-growing in Florida will be revived as a commercial proposition, at least not for many years to come," leaving Southern California as "the only section in the United States

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[766] James E. Ingraham, "One Man's Work" [Unpublished Manuscript] (1909), p. 3 [James E. Ingraham Papers, UF].

[767] "The Story of the Everglades", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), p. 122.

[768] James E. Ingraham, "Drainage of the Everglades," in Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 19.

[769] *The Nation's Garden Spot* (Wilmington: Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, 1913), p. 17. [Brochure 113, UF]

[770] William Atherton Dupuy, "Cooperatives in Citrus Marketing", in Nathan Mayo [Commissioner, Bureau of Immigration], *Florida, an Advancing State, 1907 – 1917 – 1927: An Industrial Survey* (Tallahassee: Florida Legislature, 1928), pp. 275-301 [FSU].

in which citrus fruit may be raised, year after year, as a safe business proposition."[771] Indirectly aiding California citrus and property values, the Florida frosts also potentially augured a change in tourism also. "Florida has been a strong competitor of California for the winter tourist business," he wrote, possessing the "great advantage[s]" of "lower rates of transportation" from major Eastern cities and "more of a tropical character of climate than we have in this section," as well as "the vegetation in the southern part of Florida [having] more of a tropical appearance than that of Southern California". Yet with guests at Florida hotels "compelled to remain in steam-heated rooms" during the freeze, the booster envisaged that "a large proportion" of Florida's winter travel "will be diverted to Southern California, for some years to come".[772] Florida's freeze thus provided further, albeit freakish, evidence that Southern California was moving ahead in the inter-state rivalry. "Southern California is the semi-tropical region of the United States par excellence," West Coast boosters purred.[773]

For all these setbacks, however, the freeze also encouraged railroad and land developers to push further south into Florida, beyond a notional "frost line" which took them to the verges of the Everglades. The wetlands became the focal point for extensive reclamation schemes and a new battle-field between corporate and "populist" elements in Florida, where an immense amount of state land – approximating seventeen million acres – had already been granted to railroad corporations by the state's Bourbon administrations.[774]

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[771] "Florida and California", *Los Angeles Times* (January 7, 1898), p. 6.

[772] Ibid, p. 6.

[773] "Southern California and Florida", *Los Angeles Times* (January 30, 1897), p. 6.

[774] See Samuel Proctor, *Napoleon Bonaparte Broward: Florida's Fighting Democrat* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1957).

As with the Southern Pacific Railroad "octopus" in California, Florida thus was rife with anti-railroad and anti-corporate sentiment which shaped the rhetoric of Progressive Era governors William S. Jennings (1901-1905) and Napoleon Bonaparte Broward (1905-1909), both of whom championed reclamation.[775] Jennings succeeded in having the Everglades patented to the state by the federal government while Broward became the figurehead of the drainage scheme, campaigning and getting elected on the promise of reclaiming the Everglades as a frontier for homesteaders rather than "land grant corporations".[776] This pledge, as one scholar writes, Broward "proved unable to keep" – the expense of drainage forced the state government to sell considerable lands in the Everglades to corporate developers like Richard Bolles, owner of the Florida Fruit Lands Company, which subsequently put on the market 20,000 parcels of drained swamp lands in 1912 and 1913 at a sizeable mark-up.[777]

Broward was central to South Florida reclamation, however, before and after the first dredges were cut in 1906. That year Governor Broward sent an "open letter" to the people of Florida in which he compared the future of the Everglades to Egypt, where "the British Government undeterred by the item of expense or the fear of failure, built the great Assouan Dam which harnessed the Nile floods and made them obedient."[778] For Broward, drainage represented both a conservationist and populist measure: a means of "harnessing"

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[775] W. M. Walker, "Napoleon B. Broward – Father of Everglades Drainage", *Suniland*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (March 1925), p. 26.

[776] Governor Napoleon B. Broward, *Open Letter of Governor N. B. Broward to the People of Florida* (1906), p. 1 [UNF].

[777] Tebeau, *History of Florida*, p. 330

[778] Broward, *Open Letter*, p. 1.

unused nature and creating independent citizens. To realise this vision, he created the Everglades Drainage District and funded the state's initial efforts through a tax on South Florida lands. In recognition of his efforts, Broward was named president of the National Drainage Congress and travelled with President Roosevelt to inspect reclaimed lands in the Mississippi Valley. With growing fame, he became a vigorous national promoter of the Everglades as the future "home of the sugar cane in the United States."[779] A fellow Everglades enthusiast thus lauded Broward as a "man who…deserves endless commendation in this day, when we talk so much about the conservation of nature's resources," and for being a "masterful promoter" of the "work which will convert a vast, useless waste into what promises to be the most productive part of Florida, if not…in the whole United States of America."[780]

As with Imperial Valley, state and private promoters envisaged a republican expansion through the scientific conquest of a "useless waste". Magazines by railroads and landowners – such as the *Florida East Coast Homeseeker* which was started in 1899 and published by the Flagler Company – reported how peninsular Florida's "waste places have been settled up by a strong, courageous people," who would do the same in the Everglades.[781] Settlers who enjoyed success became local celebrities. Walter Waldin, an Iowan who migrated to Dade County in 1899, bought land bordering on the Everglades, and set out growing winter vegetables, was hailed in a 1907 article as a fine example of "the farmer and fruit grower" who had joined "the independent list".[782] Having come to

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[779] Broward, *Open Letter*, p. 1.

[780] Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 10.

[781] "The Year 1905 – the Prosperous East Coast", *FECH*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January 1906), p. 3.

[782] "Mr. Walter Waldin's Display", *FECH*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (April 1907), pp. 119-120.

"learn the secret of truck growing in the tropics," Waldin won prizes for his vegetable displays at the Dade County fair and earned a substantial income from his produce, on lands which rose rapidly in value. "Follow Mr. Waldin's methods," the magazine explained, "and you can succeed."[783]

Waldin became an active booster himself. Contributing to the *Miami Metropolis*, he contrasted South Florida with Midwestern farming, showing that the peninsula's climate and crops ("tropical fruits" and truck vegetables) created a superior agricultural existence.[784] In 1910, Waldin put his sixty-acre farm on the market for $17,000 and pursued a career as a land promoter. He wrote *Truck Farming in the Everglades*, a book which, in addition to selling his own "Beautiful Everglades Plantation," captured the promotional vision of reclamation as both a "money-making investment" for the individual and a virtuous social cause. "To the city man, living on a salary, often in a dark or stuffy office, always an underling, working in a narrow groove, dependent on today's wages for tomorrow's food, the independent countryman's life must appeal, for he is a free man, master of himself,…conversant with nature in its many moods,…and all its first impulses and pleasures."[785] Citing the national "back to the land" movement, Waldin praised the "thousands [who] began to avail themselves of the valuable opportunity to secure a home and a livelihood in this superb climate."[786] The Walter Waldin Investment Company advertised an idyllic landscape of "little" truck farms being admired by two suited

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[783] "Mr. Walter Waldin's Display", p. 119.

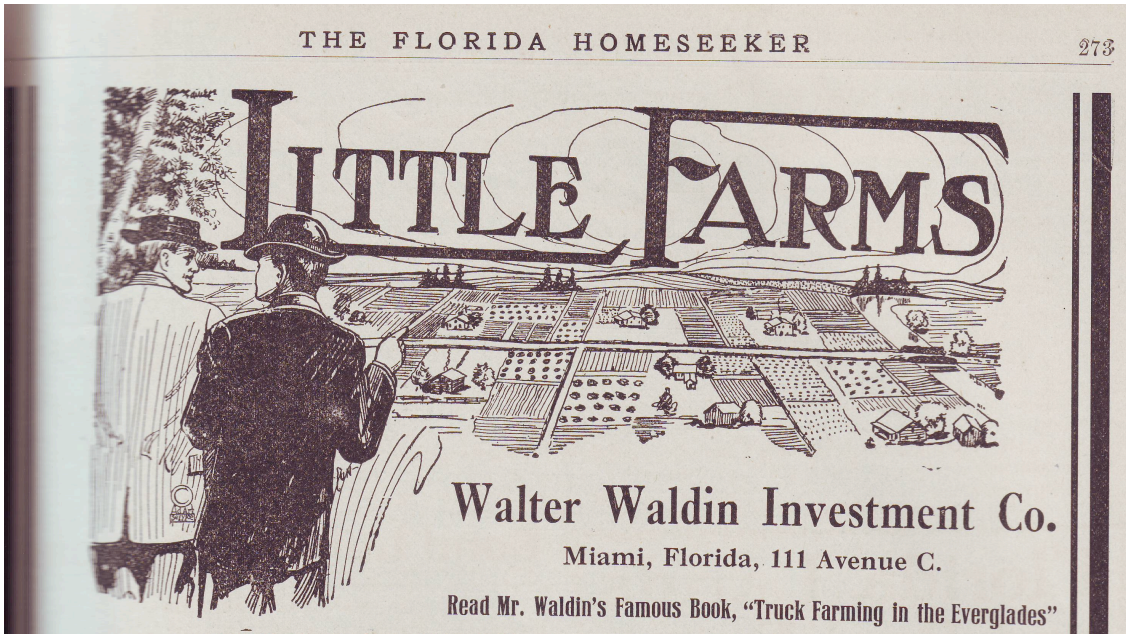
[784] Walter Waldin in *Miami Metropolis* (August 13, 1907), reproduced in "No Other Country Like Florida", *FECH*, Vol. 9, No. 9 (September 1907), p. 291.

[785] Walter Waldin, *Truck Farming in the Everglades* (Miami, 1910), p. 5 [FSU].

[786] Ibid, p. 6.

onlookers – presumably "city men" after the agrarian promise of the Everglades. Their sharp attire, however, indicated the "gentlemen" farming image – in which business savvy rather than field work was most important – as it was cultivated by modern agricultural boosters like Waldin:

Fig. 4.6 – *Little Farms* advertisement (1912) [UF][787]



Southern California, and especially Imperial Valley, meanwhile, marked a useful counterpoint for promoters of the Everglades. This reflected, in part, the latter's struggle to gain legitimacy in the eyes of Americans. Northern and Midwestern scepticism about the Everglades was prominent, exacerbated by federal government reports which questioned

[787] Advertisement for "Little Farms" by Walter Waldin Investment Company in *FECH*, Vol. 14, No. 7 (July 1912), p. 273.

the fertility of much of the reclaimed soils.[788] Federal engineer James O. Wright's 1909 report, which argued for the feasibility of drainage and was widely cited in promotional literature, was criticised by other scientists.[789] South Florida promoters were also accused of gross misrepresentations of the region's potential.[790] In response, Everglades land companies and the state government brought in newspaper editors from across the country who reported back positively on the domain.[791] Earl E. Moore, editor of the *Plaindealer* of Cleveland, Ohio, wrote, "I had a hazy idea the [Everglades] was an impenetrable swamp," but discovered instead "a wonderfully rich, fertile field, of which Florida may well be proud and in the cultivation and development of which thousands of families are to attain independent wealth."[792] Baltimore editor Day Allen Wiley wrote that "homeseekers are more and more preferring the natural life of the country to the artificial life of the city" and could "live this life…in the Everglades of Florida," where "the drainage canal is making…a

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[788] Rose, "The Swamp and Overflow Lands of Florida", pp. 15-17.

[789] For an excellent study of both the significance and the flaws of the Wright report on the Everglades, see Christopher F. Meindl, Derek H. Alderman, & Peter Waylen, "On the Importance of Environmental Claims-Making: The Role of James O. Wright in Promoting the Drainage of Florida's Everglades in the Early Twentieth Century", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 92, No. 4 (December 2002), pp. 682-701.

[790] "Florida Land Probe Starts", *Atlanta Constitution* (February 10, 1912), p. 7. "Tell The Truth About Florida" in *Palm Beach County*, reproduced in *FECH*, Vol. 13, No. 12 (December 1911), np.

[791] *Investigation of the Everglades by Leading Newspaper Men Representing America's Foremost Publications – As Seen by the Brightest Minds of Today* (Kansas City: Chambers Land Co., 1912) [UF].

[792] Letter of April 25, 1912 from Earl E. Moore [Editor, *Plaindealer* of Cleveland, Ohio] in Ibid, p. 8.

home land in truth"; while W. J. Etten, managing editor of Michigan's *Grand Rapid News*, was sufficiently impressed to purchase 100 acres of Everglades land himself.[793]

South Florida boosters also cultivated parallels between their wetlands and the California desert, however. Former governor Jennings attributed his faith in the reclamation project first to travelling to California and witnessing the effects of irrigation. "Never before had I appreciated the full value of water. As the train went on, mile after mile…through waterless plains, my eyes were opened to the possibilities of the Everglades."[794] Here and elsewhere the irrigated West stood in for the potential of the maligned Everglades. On the agricultural value of South Florida, the State Chemist R. E. Rose, a former superintendent on the Disston scheme, thus wrote that "the rich, undrained muck or swamp lands in Florida" were similar to "the wonderfully fertile arid lands of the West," since both were "extremely fertile soils…rich in all the elements of plant food" which had been considered "unproductive…simply for want of air [or] water."[795] Man and technology were righting these natural "wants," however, and opening up prime agricultural real estate. California's Imperial Valley demonstrated as much. In 1916, to counter continuing scepticism about the Everglades, Rose wrote, "This [is] by no means the first instance in which the Soil Experts of the Government have condemned as worthless some of the most productive soils in America; a notable instance was the condemnation of

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[793] Letter of May 6, 1912, from Day Allen Willey [Managing Editor, Baltimore, Md.] in Ibid, p. 12. Letter of May 7, 1912, from W. J. Etten [Managing Editor, *Grand Rapids News* of Grand Rapids, Michigan] in Ibid, p. 6.

[794] Ex-Governor William Jennings quoted in *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), pp. 122-123.

[795] R. E. Rose in *Miami Metropolis*, reproduced in "Value of Florida Muck Lands After Thoroughly Drained", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (February 1910), p. 54.

the soils of the 'Imperial Valley of California', pronounced worthless for agricultural purposes by the U.S. authorities [in 1902], and now noted as one of the most productive regions of America, as are the Everglades."[796]

Another booster to make links with Southern California was Dr. John Gifford, a vigorous advocate of draining the Everglades. Formerly an assistant professor of Forestry at Cornell University, Gifford was a prolific author on conversation and reclamation, "recognised as one of the most celebrated authorities on tropical forestry, tropical fruits and the tropics in general," and a writer who "had devoted his life to the study of conditions in tropical and semi-tropical countries, and Southern Florida in particular."[797] In a series of his essays on drainage which were published by the Everglades Land Sales Company, Gifford pointed to the success of Southern California irrigation while also suggesting that the Everglades could surpass that high mark. "We must not forget that this reclamation is in a land of perpetual summer in the only part of the mainland of the United States which is truly tropical, and where the productive capacity of the land is many times greater than in northern climes."[798] Other promoters expressed similarly bold claims that Florida's drained lands would outdo California's irrigated lands in being cheaper and more fertile, and that

[796] Rose, "The Swamp and Overflow Lands of Florida", p. 18.

[797] Advertisement for "A New Everglade Book," *The Everglade Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (February 1911), p. 13.

[798] Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, pp. 10-11.

"the greatly superior climate of the Everglades district is revealed by some comparisons between South Florida and southern California."[799]

Boosters of the Everglades also moved beyond the semi-tropical metaphor favoured by earlier Florida land promoters. Although the promotional magazine, *Tropic*, explained that "the Everglades of Florida are semi-tropical" – unlike "other less known everglades…located in our north central states [which] have a temperate climate" – the publication's title told another story.[800] The Kansas City-based Everglades Land Sales Company sold lands in "The Only Truly Tropical Section of the United States."[801] By the 1900s important changes made these tropical claims more appealing. As Gifford wrote, "The quantity of tropical fruit consumed by the American people is enormous, and this consumption is considerably on the increase," with "bananas, oranges, grapefruit, limes and pineapples…almost as staple as wheat and corn."[802] Earlier fears regarding the over-production of such fruits had thus diminished with greater demand and made lands suitable for these tropical "staples" economically desirable. Furthermore, improvements had been made in scientific knowledge of tropical diseases. "In order to contract malaria or yellow fever one must be bitten by an infected mosquito," Gifford wrote in 1911. "The notion that these fevers are carried by miasmatic [sic] emanations from swamp lands no longer

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[799] Pfeiffer, "Drainage vs. Irrigation", p. 8. "Climatic Comparisons from Government Bulletin", *The Everglade Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 1911), p. 11. See, also, "Everglades Drainage", *Christian Science Daily Monitor*, reprinted in *The Everglade Magazine*, p. 6.

[800] Bertha Comstock, "Reclaimed Muck Lands", *Tropic*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (July 1914), p. 21. [UF]

[801] Advertisement by Everglades Land Sales Company in *Everglade Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 1911), p. 13 [UF].

[802] Ibid, p. 30.

holds."[803] The implications for Florida – and the wider South – were significant. Although the prevalence of mosquitoes in wetlands meant that health concerns were not wholly removed, boosters directly countered the idea that South Florida was necessarily a hotbed of tropical disease. A 1912 editorial "Boosting the Renewed South" thus declared, "Sanitary science has abolished [the worst terrors of the tropics] in the subtropical South."[804] The reclaimed farms of the Everglades would not be home to decay and disease but to prosperous American producers.

Boosters also juxtaposed the Everglades with America's overseas tropical acquisitions. Professor H. W. Wiley contrasted the sugar-producing qualities of the Everglades with "Hawaii, Porto Rico, and the Philippines," while Gifford pointedly declared that the Everglades were "larger than Porto Rico or Jamaica," as he cited government confirmation of the region's tropicality.[805] In 1904 the federal Department of Agriculture conducted a biological survey which found that there were, in fact, "three regions in the United States which belong to the Tropical Zone". These were Southern Texas by the mouth of the Rio Grande; along the Colorado River in Arizona and California; and Southern Florida. Gifford editorialised that "the first two are hot and arid" while "the other is humid and pleasant throughout the major portion of the year," making Southern Florida "the only tropical part of this country which can be reached by rail."[806] Begun in

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[803] Gifford, "Trees As An Aid to Drainage" written for *La Hacienda* in 1911, reprinted as chapter three in Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 23.

[804] "Boosting the Renewed South", *FECH*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (January 1912), p. 20.

[805] "Professor Wiley on Sugar", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), p. 135. Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 7.

[806] Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 13.

1911 by local landowners, the *Everglade Magazine* called on prospective settlers to read the works of Waldin and Gifford in order to understand the conquest of this tropical land. "To study and then to practically apply is the best way to learn to use your Everglade land. Men like Gifford and Waldin are blazing the way."[807] Settlers were thus called to come join in the "progress of America's Latest Empire".[808]

Promoters infused their visions of republican reclamation with assertions of tropical colonialism. Drainage, a 1911 guide to Miami and its hinterland espoused, was being achieved by the "white man conqueror," who alone had "scientifically harnessed" the tropical wetlands.[809] As reclamation encroached on their homelands, the Seminole Indians were encouraged to work as tourist exhibits for excursion companies and in tourist camps. Once feared as a mixed-race band that combated the American military, the Seminoles were also sanitised of the links to runaway slaves, which sat uneasily with boosters of a Jim Crow state who sanctified racial separation. Instead the Seminoles were romanticised by promoters like Florida East Coast Railway agent Willard L. Bragg as the most "dignified" and "pure" Native Americans left in the nation – superior to "notoriously immoral" Western reservation Indians for having lived independently with "their blood being practically pure and undefiled from mixture with any other race."[810] Like their Everglades home, the Seminoles were described as the purest distillations of American wilderness. But drainage promoters simultaneously cast reclamation as a benign development which would

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[807] Clase D. Vallette, "Preparation", *Everglade Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 1911), p. 2.

[808] Ibid, p. 2.

[809] F. W. De Croix, *Historical, Industrial, and Commercial Data of Miami and Fort Lauderdale* (St. Augustine: The Record Co., 1911), pp. 167, 175 [UF].

[810] Willard L. Bragg, "The Picturesque Seminoles", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), p. 147.

force the Seminoles to adapt or disappear. "The poor Seminole; what of him?" Gifford wrote, applying the conquest narrative to people as well as nature. "The time will soon come when he will have to put on pants and go to work on the land, join his relatives in Oklahoma, or die from the effects of too much bad whiskey."[811]

Fruit, vegetable, and sugar growing in reclaimed South Florida, meanwhile, incorporated agribusiness practices which often divorced land ownership from field labour. As Walter Waldin informed his readers, one of the attractions of truck farming in the Everglades was that landowners "frequently hire all work done," while "our profits will certainly average more than twice as much [as in the Midwest]".[812] Periodicals like *Tropic* magazine featured photographs of black labourers in reclaimed fields, confirming that white settlers could prosper without having to do the hardest work themselves.[813]

Promoters thus sold progressive white communities which could make use of excluded African American workers. The Florida Land Development Company advertised five-acre tracts in the "Everglade Gardens" of Okeechobee Park through the following glittering array of qualities: "Most Productive Soil in Existence. Cool Summers. Mild

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[811] Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 11.

[812] Waldin, "No Other Country Like Florida", p. 291.

[813] See photograph of "Sugar Cane on 'Glade Land – Near Davie, Florida – *Few People Realise the Great Productive Potential of this Large Region*" in John Gifford, "Looking Ahead. Views on Everglades Topics", *Tropic*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (July 1914), p. 6 [HMSF]. African American field workers were similarly featured in an advertisement by the Florida East Coast Railway Company, Model Land Company, and other Florida land companies in *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), p. 113.

Winters. Pure Water. Perfectly Healthy. No Swamps. Few Insects".[814] The five-acre tracts on sale for $250 on various payment schemes – and where "All Kinds of Fruits and Vegetables Thrive" – were "Nature's Gift to Florida." Another crucial attraction, however, appeared in the advertisement's small print: "No negroes own land in Okeechobee Park." The specificity of ownership – rather than presence – was significant. "Negroes" were available to agriculturists in Okeechobee Park – as labourers who came in for the harvests – but they did not "own land," and thus were not citizens of the republican community forming in this "Mid-Winter Garden of America."[815]

Promoters of the Everglades, like those of Imperial Valley, placed republican independence and colonialist hierarchy in the same reclaimed fields, as dredging altered the landscape. In 1911 the Florida East Coast Railway began a branch line from Maytown south through the interior of the State, which reached Okeechobee in 1915 and enabled faster marketing of the region's crops.[816] Magazines showed drained tracts "ready for the plough":

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[814] Advertisement for Okeechobee Park by Florida Land Development Company, *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), p. 115.

[815] Ibid, p. 115.

[816] *The Story of a Pioneer: A Brief History of the Florida East Coast Railway and Associated Enterprises, Flagler System, 1885-6…1935-6* (St. Augustine: The Record Company, 1936), p. 25 [FIU].

Fig. 4.7 – *Drained Prairie Lands* photograph (1911)[817]

Drained Prairie Land Ready for the Plough.

If not entirely quashed, the preconceptions of South Florida as a swampy morass were eroded by such images depicting the man-made conquest of tropical wetlands. Thus Gifford wrote, "The land of the moccasin, alligator and Seminole will see a great transformation in a very short time," particularly since cultivation "does not take long in a tropical country."[818] The Everglades thus symbolised a final triumph of Anglo-American enterprise over Florida's tropical swamps. Describing a new farm in 1910, a booster wrote, "This is a scene on the once despised Everglades, the supposed home of venomous snakes, reeking in

[817] "Drained Prairie Land Ready for the Plough" photograph from "A Neglected Opportunity", *FECH*, Vol. 13, No. 11 (November 1911), p. 413.

[818] Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 11.

malaria and unfit for human habitation. It has been said that man can never improve on nature; but one view of this magnificent place contradicts that."[819]

Conclusion

In the Progressive Era promoters of Southern California and peninsular Florida turned to land reclamation as a process which created new frontiers for American expansion. Irrigation in California and drainage in Florida supported the selling of interior lands which had long been perceived as harsh and "worthless" environments. In the deserts of Southern California, irrigation enabled the expansion of prosperous agriculture and sustained the visions of a semi-tropical state and agricultural cornucopia. Although an inverted process, drainage carried the same significance in the selling and development of South Florida. In both cases, Americans were persuaded that desert and swamp could be transfigured into productive domains for republican society. Once Imperial Valley and the Everglades had been "conquered and inhabited," promoters stressed, they would be sites of "true cooperation" which brought settlers together through the prosperous cultivation of semi-tropical agriculture.[820] Imperial Valley was thus hailed as a "modern miracle" of environmental improvement and the drainage of the Everglades as "the ultimate changing of a hitherto worthless watery waste into a land of happy homes, productive farms and thriving communities."[821]

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[819] "First Farm in the Everglades", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (April 1910), pp. 122-123.

[820] Clase D. Vallette, "Cooperation the Watchword", *Everglade Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 10 (February 1911), p. 2.

[821] "Great Imperial Valley, Theme of W. H. Holabird", *Los Angeles Times* (October 2, 1912), p. 5. Charles B. Reynolds, *Standard Guide to Florida* (New York: Foster & Reynolds, Co., 1921), p. 79 [USF].

The agricultural societies produced through reclamation and promotion did not match the booster imagery of republican small-farming. By the 1920s, land ownership in Imperial Valley was concentrated in few hands.[822] Indeed, as Donald Pisani writes, "Irrigation became the ally, instead of the enemy, of land monopoly and concentration," as control of water sources and high lands costs benefited wealthier agribusiness owners.[823] Much the same could be said of drainage programmes in the Everglades, which also suffered repeated setbacks in the attempted removal of water. Despite promoters having made 20,000 sales by 1913, fewer than 1,000 people actually lived in the Everglades in 1920. The frustrations of Everglades developers were evident in James Ingraham's charge in 1922 that the federal government had unfairly prioritised California over Florida: "If the Government would have done one small part of its duty towards Florida, in the way of drainage, that it extended to irrigation in the far West, Florida would have three or four millions of people here instead of one million, and its attractions for health, pleasure and business would be as well known, or better known, than California."[824] In the following decade, however, the wetlands, like much of South Florida, "began to attract much more attention" again, and the Everglades became an important sugar producing area, with 10,000 acres of sugar cane cultivated around Lake Okeechobee.[825] Growers employed migratory African American labourers, many from Georgia, to work the truck and sugar

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[822] Nye, *America as Second Creation*, p. 228.

[823] Pisani, *From Family Farm to Agribusiness*, p. xi.

[824] Excerpt from James E. Ingraham, "Keep Your Head above the Financial Water and Bet on the Growth of the Country", *Manufacturer's Record* (January 26, 1922). [James E. Ingraham Papers, UF]

[825] Meindl, Alderman, and Waylen, "On the Importance of Environmental Claims-Making", pp. 696-697.

farms.[826] Both Imperial Valley and the Florida Everglades thus became home to racially stratified agricultural societies where white landowners employed non-white labourers in the reclaimed regions they promoted as the "Egypt[s] of America".[827]

Irrigation and drainage fundamentally altered the physical and imagined landscapes of California and Florida. Reclamation converted intimidating "tropical" nature into productive "American" domains. Capitalist enterprise and Anglo settlement symbolised the triumphant "hand of man" over environment. Southern California and South Florida thus benefitted from a reclamation rivalry which narrated their conquest of deserts and swamps into benign expansions of the American republic. As John Gifford wrote,

> In Southern California the hand of man has produced a highly developed and attractive region with no resources except vim and climate. Obstacles were met on every hand. In Southern Florida we have the resources, but the vim has been lacking. We have been reposing since the Seminole war. It is not laziness. We have been indulging our love of leisure. But it is this grappling with nature which develops the latent forces within the man. The coming age is to be an age of conquest, the conquest of nature, the reclamation of swamp lands and the irrigation of deserts.[828]

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[826] Hahamovitch, *Fruits of their Labor*, pp. 116-121.

[827] "Irrigation Possibilities of the Colorado River", *Imperial Valley Press*, p. 8. "The Prosperity of Egypt", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No 4 (April 1910), p. 140.

[828] Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 102.

Chapter 5

"New Edens of the Saxon Home-Seeker":

Los Angeles, Miami, and Urban Life in Semi-Tropical America

Cities and city life became increasingly prominent in the promotion of Southern California and peninsular Florida in the early twentieth century. Los Angeles and Miami, in particular, emerged as iconic destinations within the two semi-tropical states. To an extent, this involved a shift in emphasis, if not an apparent contradiction, since the promotional visions had long fixated on fecund natures which offered settlers and visitors republican alternatives to an increasingly urban-industrial nation. Cities ostensibly meshed poorly with this booster mentality, often seen as disturbing examples of civilisation rather than nature which were linked historically with Old World social "diseases" of over-crowding and class strife. America's agrarian myth – although waning by the turn of the century – had long cast urban centres as "sores on the body politic" and praised small farmers for being "virtually aloof from the dissipations, effeminacy, indolence, and vice of cities".[829] Agricultural boosters in the two states often shared in this viewpoint, declaring with gusto that California was becoming "*the great* agricultural State of the Union" or that Florida was "essentially an agricultural state".[830] Although such statements were not inaccurate, urban growth and city promotion expanded in a dialectical pattern in both states, where semi-tropical agriculture matured into capital-intensive fields beyond the scope of many

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[829] Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (New York: Knopf, 1957), p. 142.

[830] *Semi-Tropic California*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (April 1880), p. 71 [BL]. George M. Chapin, *Florida, 1513-1913, Past and Future* (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1914), p. 141 [UF].

Americans. Boosters of Semi-Tropical America thus moved beyond a straightforward critique of urbanisation and lauding of agriculture (although these elements remained) into emphases on their cities as new and distinctive settlements.[831] The urban visions also reflected and fed changing conceptions of national identity and way-of-life, as boosters targeted a growing constituency of middle-class Americans who placed relaxation and contentment at least on a par with hard work and economic gain. With the "producer" republic evolving into a "consumer" nation, California and Florida were sold as open, sun-rich cities which promised modern living cleansed and improved by semi-tropical nature.

This chapter analyses the selling of Los Angeles and Miami because they became the most widely-promoted cities in Southern California and peninsular Florida, respectively, employed semi-tropical metaphors throughout, and overlapped and influenced one another in significant ways. Scholars have begun to highlight links between the cities: a 1999 collection of essays on the pair notes, "Though they are situated a continent apart, Miami and Los Angeles are perhaps more like each other than like other American cities. At the same time, they retain obvious individual identities."[832] The essays focus on the growth and relationship of the two cities from the 1920s to the 1990s, however, providing only minimal insight into the earlier period when the booster tropes were first

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[831] For typical California and Florida promotional critiques of urbanisation in the Northeast, see, for example, E. F. Spence, "Los Angeles", *Californian*, Vol. 1 No. 1 (October 1891), p. 3. Helen Harcourt, *Home Life in Florida* (Louisville: John P. Morton & Co., 1889), p. 15 [FAUL].

[832] William Deverell, Greg Hise, and David C. Sloane, "Orange Empires: Comparing Miami and Los Angeles", *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (May 1999), pp. 145-152.

formulated.[833] Then, the two cities competed with and distinguished themselves from each other – and Los Angeles' boosters imagery and success fed into the selling of Miami – as their chambers of commerce, magazines, and newspapers evoked fundamentally similar visions of healthful cities which benefited, rather than deteriorated, American civilisation. Both were sold as semi-tropical cities environmentally and socially different from and preferable to the industrial metropolises of the North and Midwest, replacing the latter's factory smoke, crowded streets, and fierce materialism, with home-owning neighbourhoods, pleasant avenues, and outdoor existences. Like their agricultural predecessors, urban boosters evoked a longstanding criticism of the relentlessness of Northern capitalism and city life to suggest that the acquisition of wealth was not all that Miami or Los Angeles offered. To be sure, the cities were shown to be sites of progressive financial growth. Yet they were also sold as modifying forces on Anglo-American character, balancing northern entrepreneurialism with a more leisurely and less cutthroat lifestyle.

In that sense, Los Angeles and Miami represented organic culminations of the selling of California and Florida as semi-tropical lands. Leisure and labour would coexist in the healthy, modern cities of Semi-Tropical America. For boosters, Los Angeles and Miami rewarded hard-working Americans from the North and Midwest who had earned a more contented life which was impossible in industrial cities. Republican ideals based around agriculture were thus transferred and moulded to garden cities in which "independence" was defined as the ownership of a suburban home with a verdant garden. But racial and

[833] Deverell, "Orange Empires"; Gregory Bush's article, although primarily interested in the 1920s, dealt briefly with the promotional links between Miami and Los Angeles in the 1910s: Bush, "'Playground of the U.S.A.: Miami and the Promotion of Spectacle", pp. 153-172.

class matrices continued to inform these booster visions of uplifting independence. Civic developers relied upon non-white peoples to fill vital roles in urban economies (especially, Mexicans in Southern California and African Americans in Florida), while the booster literature aimed at settlers, investors, and tourists, focused on the lifestyle and socioeconomic attractions of the cities for Anglo-Americans. Indeed, promoters cited dominant populations of predominantly white settlers as critical to the formation of desirable cities which merged the leisure possibilities of the semi-tropics with the progressive efficiency of urban America. *De facto* and *de jure* polices of racial zoning were normalised within booster representations of ideal cities where construction and service roles were marginalised to ethnic and racial minorities. Homogeneous prosperity became the defining image of the healthier and happier American communities of Los Angeles and Miami.

Los Angeles preceded and exceeded Miami. Founded as a Spanish pueblo in 1781, the City of Angels grew slowly for a century, home to just 11,000 people before the boom in the 1880s saw the population increase nearly five-fold by 1890 – six years before Miami was formalised as a city. In subsequent decades, in-migration, spatial expansion, and urban vegetation fuelled a booster paradigm of Los Angeles as "the Most Progressive Metropolis of the Twentieth Century".[834] For the city's promoters, like Charles Fletcher Lummis, editor of *Land of Sunshine* magazine from 1895, "progress" was indicated not only in commercial and population growth (vital as these defining features were) but also in the evolution of a higher American civilisation and lifestyle, which was fostered by the city's

[834] *Greater Los Angeles: The Most Progressive Metropolis of the Twentieth Century* (Los Angeles, 1907), p. 74 [UCLA].

open nature and racial constituency. Inhabiting a formerly Spanish-Mexican town, Anglo-Americans were now the majority in Los Angeles and – while maintaining their more "energetic" traits compared to the Latin "natives" – cultivated a different kind of living. As Lummis wrote, "[I]n this motherly climate the race now foremost in the world will fairly outstrip itself in achievement; and most of all in what is best of all – the joy of life."[835] Poverty need not exist except in exotic ghettoes, which boosters cast as remnants of Southern California's "romantic past" and which were, in any case, removed from the suburban neighbourhoods being sold by promoters. Los Angeles would thus be home to a middling population "with means, leisure and incentive for culture," a city with no "undesirable classes," "no 'Shanty-towns' and no 'North Ends'".[836]

Incorporated as a city in 1896, after Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway reached Biscayne Bay, Miami was much smaller and considerably less industrial than Los Angeles. Its promotional imagery owed much to that of the West Coast City, however. Typical of South Florida boosters, a writer in the *Miami Metropolis* commented in 1912, "I called Miami the Los Angeles of Florida [and] have now no reason to take this back, for Miami is certainly doing herself proud."[837] Similarly to Los Angeles, Miami was sold as a "young" city unlike immigrant-ridden Northern metropolises – a semi-tropical urban space where the incoming Anglo population could experience contented lives without losing their enterprising qualities. "What particularly strikes one at Miami," the writer explained, "is

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[835] Charles F. Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 4, No. 3(February 1896), p. 141. [Hereafter cited as *LS*]

[836] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den," *LS* (August 1895), p. 135.

[837] "Stroller Takes Observations in Miami and Tells of Things Which He Sees", *Miami Metropolis* (January 9, 1912), p. 7.

the spirit of hustle and boost, the splendid streets, the fine residences, with their ornamental gardens, the stately royal palms and the waving cocoanut trees, all of which typify semi-tropical Florida."[838] The capitalist "spirit of hustle and boost" was importantly mediated by the regenerative qualities of open streets, semi-tropical foliage, and fine homes, creating an improved urban population. As in Los Angeles, racial separation coexisted with this republican imagery. Legal statutes and civic policies mandating segregation reinforced the selling of Miami as a product of "white man's ingenuity [and] science".[839] In reality, African Americans comprised between 25% and 40% of Miami's population throughout this period and were vital to its socioeconomic development.[840]

The growing significance of Los Angeles and Miami within Southern California and Florida, respectively, reflected a national trend of urbanisation, which had long shaped the selling of Semi-Tropical America.[841] Between 1865 and 1920, America changed from a mostly rural to a predominantly urban population, as available land and agricultural prices declined (sometimes precipitously), and cities increasingly offered greater opportunities for socioeconomic mobility. As historian Arthur Schlesinger wrote, "It was the city rather than the unpeopled wilderness that was beginning to dazzle the imagination of the nation."[842] Cities lured immigrants from Europe but also rural Americans, in particular younger

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[838] "Stroller Takes Observations in Miami", p. 7.

[839] F. W. De Croix, *Historical, Industrial, and Commercial Data of Miami and Fort Lauderdale – Dade County, Florida* (St. Augustine: The Record Co., 1911), pp. 24, 34 [UF].

[840] Paul S. George, "Colored Town: Miami's Black Community, 1896-1930", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (April 1978), p. 436.

[841] Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Rise of the City, 1878-1898* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1933).

[842] Ibid, p. 61.

generations, with the promise of improved economic prospects, social possibilities, and an escape from the isolation of farm life.[843] Urbanisation especially characterised Northern society: by 1890, "about two out of every three persons in New York and Connecticut were townsfolk, four out of every five in Massachusetts and nine out of every ten in Rhode Island."[844] Chicago famously transformed from a frontier outpost to a metropolis of over a million residents by 1890.[845] "The city is to contain an ever-increasing proportion of the population," wrote Reverend Josiah Strong in the *North American Review* in 1897, "and to constitute a factor of ever-increasing importance in the national life."[846]

This did not mean that urban growth was considered an undiluted benefit to "the national life," however. Popular American fears about "industrialisation, immigration, family disruption,…and deepening class divisions all focused on the growing cities."[847] Urbanisation spurred a cultural crisis as it wrenched countless citizens from smaller, rural communities and thrust them into complex urban scenes which destroyed ideals of republican homogeneity.[848] By 1900 Northern cities sprawled with industrial factories and high-rise buildings, as well as vast numbers of "undesirable" immigrants from Southern

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[843] See the chapter on urbanisation in Samuel P. Hays, *The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 47-68.

[844] Schlesinger, *Rise of the City*, p. 68.

[845] William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992).

[846] Rev. Josiah Strong, "The Problem of the Twentieth Century City", *North American Review*, Vol. 165, No. 490 (September 1897), p. 343.

[847] Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. vii.

[848] David W. Noble, *The Progressive Mind, 1890-1917* (Minneapolis: Burgess, 1981), pp. 1-22.

and Eastern Europe – in the eyes of many Anglo-Americans, utter foreigners whose apparent inferiority meant they invariably filled unskilled positions at the bottom of the corporate-industrial economy and inhabited congested slums.[849] Cities were thus associated with a divisive wealth gap and political corruption – typified by the "boss" system of inner cities – as well as dirty and over-crowded places which centralised the frantic nature of modern existence.[850] A magazine writer lamented the "significant…wear of city life on the nervous system" as a "peculiarly American danger," since his countrymen were showing such a preference for city living.[851] The rapid urban expansion of the period impelled a Newtonian counterforce as Progressive Era reformers focused much of their attention on the "vices" of the nation's cities while thousands of middle-class Americans, taking advantage of new transportation facilities, especially streetcars, sought out "suburban" locations – near to but outside of business and working class districts – in which to buy homes and settle.

This American ambivalence toward cities shaped the promotion of Los Angeles and Miami as unique and predominantly suburban cities which, in combining progressive civilisation with healthful nature, represented unique urban spaces. In doing so, their promoters echoed the contemporaneous City Beautiful Movement, in which civic planners in Boston, Denver, and other cities, used aesthetics and architecture to create moral and

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[849] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988).

[850] See Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies among the Tenements of New York* [1890] (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967).

[851] "The Strain of City Life", *Manufacturer and Builder*, Vol. 18, No. 9 (September 1886), p. 211.

civic virtue among urban populations.[852] Consistent with earlier boosters, however, promoters of Los Angeles and Miami stood apart in focusing on the semi-tropical qualities of their cities. The effects of semi-tropical climates and natures on urban living were fundamental to the selling imagery. After lamenting the tendency for Easterners to migrate to cities, former city mayor E. F. Spence thus depicted Los Angeles as a city apart, where "the stranger who leaves the East…finds a city in the centre of a district calling to mind Italy…[Yet also] he finds a modern city, buildings that would be a credit to any city of the East; yet there is something strange about it all. It is the verdure that is tropical in all the term implies; every yard has its palms, bananas or other tropical trees and plants."[853] Twenty years on, Miami was boosted in almost identical terms, for its "rich splendour, its harbour, its tropical aspect, its climate," which made for "the most perfect city in the United States and far superior to some of the well known cities of the supposed 'Sunny Italy'."[854] By inhabiting these cities, promoters declared, Anglo-Americans could leave behind many of the traditional problems of urbanisation and experience a superior lifestyle. Here were progressive urban "playgrounds" where, as Charles Dudley Warner wrote, "the vital forces of modern life are not enervated, but have added to them something of the charm of a less anxious and more contented spirit."[855] Dependent on policies of racial exclusion and class stratification, the promotional visions of Los Angeles and Miami represented culminations of the semi-tropical American imagery – urban destinations where uplifting leisure and enterprising labour together formed the basis for renewed Anglo-American societies.

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[852] William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1994).

[853] Spence, "Los Angeles", *Californian*, p. 8.

[854] De Croix, *Historical, Industrial, and Commercial Data of Miami*, pp. 215.

[855] Charles Dudley Warner, "Race and Climate", *LS*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (February 1896), p. 106.

Los Angeles, Semi-Tropical California

California had a strong urban element from the 1850s, belying Frederick Jackson Turner's interpretation of cities as the terminal stop in the "social evolution" of frontier societies.[856] After the Gold Rush, settlers moved into San Francisco, creating in the Bay Area a thriving port which by 1870 was the fourteenth largest city in America and the undisputed centre of industry and wealth on the Pacific Coast.[857] Southern California, meanwhile, remained a distinctly pastoral region, where Los Angeles, a journalist recalled, was "considered one of the toughest cow towns in the Southwest".[858] In 1880, when San Francisco had a population of 234,000, Los Angeles was home to 11,000.[859] With railroads, tourism, and agricultural developments, however, the following decade saw an influx of settlers into Los Angeles, which contributed to a state-wide shift towards urban living. In the 1890s California's urban population for the first time exceeded its rural populace:

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[856] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* [1893] (New York: Ungar, 1963), p. 1. See Richard C. Wade, "Urbanisation", in C. Vann Woodward (ed.), *The Comparative Approach to American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 187-205.

[857] Kevin Starr, *Inventing the Dream: California through the Progressive Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 130.

[858] Walter V. Woehlke, "Los Angeles – Homeland", *Sunset*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (January 1911), p. 3.

[859] Robert Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 78-82.

Fig. 5.1 – Table of California Population Statistics, Urban and Rural (1870-1920)

Year	California Population	Urban Population	Rural Population	% Urban	% Rural
1870	560,247	208,437	351,809	37.2	62.8
1880	864,694	370,611	494,083	42.9	57.1
1890	1,213,398	589,464	623,934	48.6	51.4
1900	1,485,053	776,820	708,233	52.3	47.7
1910	2,377,549	1,468,419	909,130	61.8	38.2
1920	3,426,861	2,326,959	1,099,902	67.9	32.1

Historical Statistics of the United States – Millennial Edition – Vol. 1 – Population (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 1-213.

Still close in 1900, the state's rural and urban constituents pulled sharply apart in the next twenty years, increasing by 55% and 200%, respectively. By 1920 the Pacific state, including Southern California, had become an urban-dominant society.

Los Angeles, meanwhile, grew into the urban centre of semi-tropical California, having surpassed San Diego as the terminus for the first direct railroads into the region, and was promoted as a thoroughly distinctive American city – although, initially, some boosters claimed a predecessor of sorts in another semi-tropical city: New Orleans. This had logic since the two cities were physically connected in 1882 by the Southern Pacific Railroad's southern branch. Moreover, New Orleans, with a population of 216,000, suggested the growth potential of much-smaller Los Angeles. The comparison existed because of environmental similarities, however. A writer in the *Los Angeles Times* explained that the two cities shared a semi-tropical climate, a "softness of…verdure and…beauty of…vegetation," and foreign origins which made them exotic from an American perspective. "In New Orleans the traces of French occupancy are as plain as, if not plainer than, the remnants of Spanish-American population and Spanish-American habits in Los

Angeles."[860] Both cities offered an attractive cosmopolitanism and Latin heritage but were being increasingly shaped by Anglo-American customs. "Slowly and surely," the journalist wrote, "Anglo-Saxon selfishness and push are encroaching upon all that once was Spanish or French in either city. The adobe of California will be in the near future a thing of the past, and the French *boutique* will only be found on the other side of the Atlantic."[861] At the same time, Los Angeles was cast as a better kind of semi-tropical city.[862] Whereas New Orleans was associated with outbreaks of yellow fever and a "summer [which] is long, warm and oppressive," Los Angeles possessed a healthful and liveable climate, with summers when "the very warm days are few and of short duration." Although dry, Los Angeles also possessed "intensified" semi-tropical flora: "Here the verdure is greener, the flowers brighter-hued, the trees more stately, [and] the fruit more luscious than in its sister city."[863]

Promotion was led by the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, formed for the second and permanent time in October, 1888, after the collapse of the real estate boom. Recognising the interconnectedness of urban and agricultural development, the city's business elite organised to fund and formalise the selling of Los Angeles and its hinterland,

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[860] "Semi-Tropic America", *Los Angeles Times* (August 13, 1882), p. 3.

[861] Ibid, p. 3.

[862] "Los Angeles Temperature", *Los Angeles Herald* (September 3, 1905), p. 1. Benjamin Truman made a similar comparison but with Nice instead of New Orleans: "With the bare exception of Nice – where the climate is semi-tropical, of course, yet often bleak and humid, there is no city on the globe to be at all compared with Los Angeles, whose attractions cannot be adequately enumerated". Benjamin C. Truman, *Southern California* (Los Angeles: M. Rieder, 1903), np [CSL].

[863] "Semi-Tropic America", p. 3.

with the constitutional objectives "to foster and encourage commerce, to stimulate home manufactures, to induce immigration and the subdivision, settlement and cultivation of our lands, to assist in the development of the material resources of this region and generally to promote the business interests of this section."[864] Within a few years, the chamber included over 500 of the "leading businessmen, capitalists and professional men of the city," and had disseminated four pamphlets with a circulation of 165,000 and 50,000 copies of bulletins "through the East to people who wish information about this country".[865] By 1899 observers praised the stellar efforts of a chamber which produced over 700,000 pamphlets "descriptive of this country and its resources" as well as "matter…prepared for hundreds of eastern magazines and newspaper articles."[866]

Among its most significant contributions was the magazine *Land of Sunshine* – a semi-literary monthly started in 1894 and initially funded by the chamber of commerce. Lavishly illustrated, the magazine became a particularly eloquent, conservative voice among the loud chorus of Southern California boosterism – in its own words, a publication "fit to stand as a type of Southern California culture".[867] The magazine was supplied to major libraries throughout the East, quoted in the dailies of New York, Boston, and Chicago, and had an estimated 50,000 readers at one year old.[868] *Land of Sunshine* was

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[864] *New Facts and Figures Concerning Southern California – Including the Actual Experience of Individual Producers* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1891), pp. 19-20 [CSL].

[865] Ibid, pp. 19-20.

[866] *Attractive Los Angeles* (Chicago: Art Illustrating Association, 1899), np [UCLA].

[867] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1895), p. 39.

[868] "Eastern Libraries", *LS*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (August 1894), p. 58. Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1895), p. 39. Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (August 1895), p. 133.

edited by Massachusetts-born Charles F. Lummis, who had walked from Ohio to the West Coast in the 1880s and developed a deep faith in the regenerative qualities of Southern California, as well as in Social Darwinism. An amateur ethnologist who wrote extensively about the benignly "primitive" traits of indigenous peoples in the American Southwest and Latin America – whom he referred to in colonialist terminology as "my brownies" – Lummis posited that Anglo-Americans in Southern California ought to change their social habits and adapt to a more Spanish, semi-tropical lifestyle.[869] His editorials were a rich tapestry of evolutionary, racial and climatic theories which placed Southern California, and Los Angeles, in particular, as the future apex of both Anglo happiness and American republicanism. A unique merger of environment and population, Southern California represented a "radical change" in American history, "the most fascinating and novel sociologic problem ever set to be worked out".[870] Los Angeles and its surrounding communities were evidence that "here for the very first time, the Saxon has made himself fully at home in a perfect type of the semi-tropics."[871]

Evolving easily from the region's agricultural and tourism promotion, the selling of Los Angeles by Lummis and others stressed the implications of a semi-tropical environment on American urban living. The chamber of commerce thus explained how the city enabled an "Open Air Life" not possible in frigid Eastern metropolises.[872] The *Los Angeles Bulletin* described city residences surrounded by "orange groves, broad-leaved

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[869] Lummis, "My Real Brownies", *LS*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (June 1897), pp. 5-9.

[870] *LS*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (January 1895), p. 35.

[871] Ibid, p. 35.

[872] Harry Ellington Brook, *Los Angeles, California – The City and Country (23rd Edition)* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1910), p. 31 [SFPL].

banana trees, and all the other charming indications to point to the fact that the climate is semi-tropical."[873] These urban characteristics were ironically related to the small farming visions of development disseminated by agricultural boosters. As Matthew Bokovoy shows, urban growth in Southern California, in part, reflected the formation of suburbs following the economic failure of many small farms – those republican symbols which infused earlier promotional representations of the region. In San Diego, for instance, "as small farms failed and landholders sold off their excess acreage, subsequent developers planned and built large suburban communities on rural lands that were in close proximity to urban San Diego…The citrus orchards were plowed under by developers [and] tract homes grew up in their place".[874] Representations of urban semi-tropical California were, in that sense, a corollary of the agricultural imagery used to entice small-scale farmers but which had often failed to translate into reality. By focusing now on the "verdure" of the city, promoters applied the semi-tropical imagery to urban environments where residents could still find rebirth amid nature. Lummis thus wrote of Los Angeles' growth, "It has been done by the brains and energy of the typical American – here, for the first time in American history, fully free to expand to full potency, to work with Nature and not against her."[875]

The city's spatial dynamics and technological development were critical to the promotion of an urban ideal. As Robert Fogelson writes, a spatial openness, in which "residences were more widely dispersed, and businesses more extensively decentralised," as well as landscape, transportation, and political factors, distinguished Los Angeles "from

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[873] "Los Angeles – A City of Gardens", *Los Angeles Bulletin* (October 26, 1885), np [CSL Scrapbooks].

[874] Matthew Bokovoy, "Inventing Agriculture in Southern California", *Journal of San Diego History*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Spring 1999), pp. 77-8.

[875] Lummis, "Los Angeles, the Metropolis of the Southwest", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1895), p. 48.

the great American metropolis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century."[876] Streetcars were seen by civic reformers nationwide as a safety valve against urban congestion and, as one reformer wrote, the "evils of city life, so far as they result from overcrowding".[877] Los Angeles developed an extensive network of trolleys called "interurbans," constructed and amalgamated by the Southern Pacific's Henry E. Huntington, which ran throughout the Los Angeles Basin.[878] By 1895 the city boasted nearly 100 miles of street railways, while also being "the first city in America to be lighted wholly by electricity".[879] Alloyed to a strong local "good roads" movement and a rising number of automobiles in the 1900s, the interurban network encouraged rapid territorial growth. Los Angeles expanded from 29 square miles in 1890 to 85 in 1910 – a size which was exceeded only by New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia.[880]

Spatial expansion was celebrated in booster representations of an urban openness distinct from older Eastern cities. In Los Angeles, a 1907 city guide announced, "There are no congested districts, no grouping of human beings in dark, poorly ventilated, crowded quarters, no unsightly flats, but homes, homes, homes on every hand on large lots with lawns, and trees and flowers in luxuriant abundance."[881] Los Angeles thus found a balance between commercial development and renewing nature. The Southern Pacific railroad

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[876] Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, p. 1.

[877] Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanisation of the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 113-115.

[878] Ibid, p. 122.

[879] "Los Angeles, the Metropolis of the Southwest", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1895), p. 48.

[880] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, pp. 139-140.

[881] *Greater Los Angeles*, p. 74.

explained how, "built in the span of a child's life, the city has a more modern appearance than any other metropolis in the world," but also possessed "miles upon miles of paved boulevards" which were "garlanded everywhere with flowers thriving in perennial beauty."[882] Tree-lined roads, parks, and gardens were pervasive in the promotional literature.[883] The "typical" Los Angeles garden was shown to be a miniature park in itself, as in a photograph of a large house and palm-filled garden from a 1908 guide which was accompanied by the caption, "Semi-tropic in climate, Los Angeles offers exceptional opportunities to the homebuilder":

[882] *California, South of Tehachapi – From Notes by the Agents* (San Francisco: Southern Pacific Passenger Department, 1908), p. 11 [CSL].

[883] See *California Souvenir Views: A Collection of 64 Views of California and Arizona* (Los Angeles: B.R. Baumgardt & Co, 1902). *Southern California, the Land of Heart's Desire: Its People, Homes, and Pleasures, Art and Architecture* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Morning Herald, 1912) [Both UCLA].

Fig. 5.2 – Los Angeles home photograph (1908) [CSL][884]

Semi-tropic in climate, Los Angeles offers exceptional opportunities to the homebuilder.

Highlighting the urban semi-tropical home, promoters depicted a city which offered rebirth to Anglo-Americans through both the inclusion of desirable natural conditions and the exclusion of unwanted social ones – especially, the huge manufacturing plants of the East and supposedly un-American immigrants who worked in such establishments. *Land of Sunshine* informed readers that, in Los Angeles, there were "no great manufacturing interests to employ thousands of half educated foreigners, such as are to be found in many eastern sections."[885] When, in the 1890s, petroleum was discovered near the city promoters

[884] Photograph in *California, South of Tehachapi*, p. 10.

[885] "The Right Kind of People", *LS*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (December 1894), p. 30.

acknowledged that it not "only enables" manufacturing enterprises "but makes them inevitable"; yet they continued to stress that Los Angeles "never will be strictly" a manufacturing city, since its main commercial basis was a prosperous agricultural hinterland.[886] Real estate companies like the Western Avenue Land and Water Company – owners of lands on electric lines to Gardena and Redondo – thus advertised the "Money in Small Farming" available in "Suburban Los Angeles," a city which was "growing toward the ocean" and offered "Interurban Electric car lines, rapid transit, low fares, perfect soil and climate,…with the advantage of outdoor life and independent health restoring employment."[887]

Los Angeles boosters also traded on the rampant nativism of the period, describing the city as having "no distinctly foreign element" and, more euphemistically, as somewhere which attracted few "uncultured" or "illiterate" migrants.[888] Immigration into the city was thus cast as an unmitigated good which was "replacing" an idle Mexican population with enterprising Anglo-Americans. In a fine example of its type, the *Los Angeles Times* explained how "the blood of the old Los Angeles was slow and sluggish," belonging to Mexicans who constituted an "aristocratic" few and a "substratum of society [who were] cloddish and rested on the dead level of content," who "went to the old Mission Church of Sundays, and had their cock-fights and rodeos,…and heard never the whistle of locomotive or the rumble of the street-car". The *Times* assured readers that "all of this is past". White Americans had introduced technological progress to the city without ruining the softer,

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[886] "Los Angeles, the Metropolis of the Southwest", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (June 1895), p. 46.

[887] Advertisement by Western Avenue Land and Water Company, Los Angeles, California, in *California Homeseeker*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (May 1902), p. 275 [CSL].

[888] "Editorial", *LS*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 1895), pp. 34-35.

"feminine" traits which made it different from the frantic, "masculine" centres of industrial America: "Bright, lovely, modern Los Angeles was born, cradled in the fragrance of the orange, and rejoicing in the sunshine of semi-tropical skies…The blood ran quick in her veins. It was not blood native to the soil, but it was the warm, stirring blood of American progress."[889]

The "birth" of Los Angeles was attributed to an incoming population of predominantly Eastern and Midwestern Americans who possessed some capital and purchased homes in suburban neighbourhoods; they were the "livest of 'live Americans'" who "have decreed that here shall be a great city – and a perfect city to live in".[890] Thus, as New England was suffering "an invasion" of unskilled immigrants who had "seriously lowered the mean of culture," Los Angeles was promoted as an evermore American city, where "politically and socially the good citizen is not ruled" by "foreign" groups and voting blocs.[891] A self-proclaimed "republican" who advocated the region's worth as a middle-class society which avoided Eastern "extremes of poverty and riches [and] a vast horde of half-educated or perhaps ignorant labourers," Lummis also repeatedly praised the selectivity of Southern California's evolving society. "This is no penal colony; we are not crying for 'population at any cost'. The immigration we wish – and emphatically the only kind we wish – is of a refined, intelligent class."[892] An unnamed "wealthy and successful eastern newspaper man" who visited Los Angeles in 1894 articulated one of the city's key selling points, "While it contains a small sprinkling of people from all sections of the

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[889] *Los Angeles Times* (January 1, 1886), np [CSL Scrapbooks].

[890] "Los Angeles, the Metropolis of the Southwest", *LS*, p. 47.

[891] "Editorial", *LS*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (January 1895), p. 34.

[892] Lummis, *LS*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (April 1895), p. 91.

globe…it is nevertheless essentially an American city, the most thoroughly so, I believe, in the Union."[893] Semi-tropical California's leading city thus resembled a truer version of republican America than did immigrant-ridden cities in the North and Midwest. For Lummis, the region was "the new Eden of the Saxon home-seeker."[894] Whites had not only domesticated the semi-tropical environment but were becoming products of it. A *Land of Sunshine* article entitled "A Semi-Tropic Crop" thus featured a photograph of a smiling white baby amid fruits and vegetables. This human "crop" – like the region's fruits – served as a glorious advertisement and eugenic symbol of the exceptional combination of an Anglo-American population and a semi-tropical climate:

Fig. 5.3 – *A Semi-Tropic Crop* photograph (1895)[895]

A SEMI-TROPIC CROP.

IF there is anything that will not grow in Southern California, it must be some plant that has escaped the catalogues, for its name is not known. The perfection attained by our fruits and flowers is as notable as the vast variety of them. This genial climate puts new character and ambition into the plant-immigrants which settle here, and they hardly know themselves, thawed out and encouraged to grow their best. Farming here is a pleasure as well as a profit. Released from the tyranny of freezes and drouths and grasshoppers, and all the other things that go to make the lot of the Eastern agriculturist a shiver of apprehension, the farmer here does his work and knows that Nature will not swindle him out of his wages. Climate and irrigation place him on a basis of "science, not chance"—as the truthful epigram of the Irrigation Congress has it. He can choose the crops he would rather raise, secure that here all his harvests will be good ones, and that "whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." But of all these crops the one that most gladdens his heart appears in the foreground, smiling in the midst of plenty.

THE PICK OF THE CROP ON A COVINA FARM.

[893] "The Right Kind of People", *LS*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (December 1894), p. 30.

[894] "Editorial", *LS*, p. 34.

[895] "A Semi-Tropic Crop", *LS*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (May 1895), p. 97.

Race interacted dynamically with class motivations in the urban visions. Due, in part, to the unprecedented number of labour conflicts in the 1890s, immigrants became associated with union organising and political radicalism.[896] They therefore represented a threat not only to Anglo-Saxon racial purity, but also to the economic power of the capitalist elite, who boosters invariably represented in Los Angeles. For urban promoters, restricting the immigration of "troublesome" foreigners helped rid their city – at least in theory – of class conflict. With the city populated mostly by "enterprising" Anglo-Americans, booster guides explained, "public opinion in Los Angeles has no sympathy with strikers and boycotters."[897] Potential settlers and investors were assured of democratic homogeneity since "Los Angeles, like Philadelphia, is a city of homes. There is probably no city in the country where so large a proportion of people of moderate means own their homes, or are acquiring them by instalment payments. This, of itself, is a guarantee for commercial peace and good government."[898]

Harrison Gray Otis – urban booster and editor of the *Los Angeles Times* – campaigned for Los Angeles to be "open shop" (free of unions) as a core factor in its identity. This set the city apart from San Francisco, which, as Michael Kazin writes, was the "quintessential union town," where powerful white-only unions ensured that closed-shop practices "prevailed in construction, transportation, and the bulk of manufacturing

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[896] Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, pp. 7-110.

[897] Harry Ellington Brook, *Los Angeles: The Chicago of the Southwest* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1904), np [UCLA].

[898] Ibid, np.

industries."[899] In Los Angeles, by contrast, aside from "a flurry of [union] organising in 1910 and 1911," unions "made little headway against the disciplined and well-financed juggernaut of the Merchant and Manufacturers Association."[900] "Open shop" practices became evidence of Los Angeles' healthier commercial civilisation. The chamber of commerce announced that "our manufacturers and the business men in Los Angeles enjoy the great advantage of being free from those troublesome and demoralising labour disturbances, which are so common in most of the large manufacturing cities of the country."[901] The open shop policy thus indicated the city's republican qualities. Otis wrote that "among all of [Los Angeles'] splendid material assets, none is so valuable, morally, and materially, as her possession of that priceless boon, industrial freedom."[902] He argued that "the championship by our people" of this "just and constitutional doctrine" ought to be followed by "any and every patriotic community in the United States".[903]

To oppose open shop practices, then, was to be "un-American". While this stance allowed for trade unionists to be challenged as dangerous subversives, it also supported a system in which Los Angeles businesses obtained cheap labour from non-white immigrant groups. Native Americans, Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and Mexicans all filled this capacity while being reviled by many whites as undesirable citizens – with the Chinese and

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[899] Michael Kazin, "The Great Exception Revisited: Organised Labor and Politics in San Francisco and Los Angeles, 1870-1940", *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 55 (August 1986), p. 393.

[900] Ibid, p. 393.

[901] Brook, *Los Angeles*, np.

[902] Harrison Gray Otis, "Los Angeles: The Ardent Hebe of the Sensuous South, A Sketch" in *Los Angeles: the Old and the New* (Los Angeles: Times-Mirror House, 1911), p. 3 [UCLA].

[903] Ibid, p. 3.

Japanese subject to exclusionary legislation. Economic needs for inexpensive workers thus existed in uneasy tandem with the booster visions of a superior Anglo-American society in semi-tropical California. Stanford University President David Starr Jordan wrote in 1907, "The Pacific Coast everywhere – farmers, fruit-growers, canners, lumbermen, housekeepers, road builders – everywhere there is a demand for cheap, coarse labour – a demand which the white men cannot meet, and for the lack of which California loses hundreds of thousands of dollars every year."[904] In the Progressive Era, thousands of Mexicans arrived into Los Angeles in search of better economic prospects.[905] Still often perversely portrayed as idle, Mexicans performed much of the hard labour as non-unionised workers in urban construction projects. As Los Angeles developers increasingly sought out Mexican immigrants to fill the "coarse" labour roles demanded by the city's expanding economy, "industrial freedom" and racial difference were cited as justification for a stratified economy in which Mexicans "seldom worked in the same industries as Anglos and were segregated into menial occupations when they did."[906] A 1920s city report thus declared matter-of-factly that Los Angeles' labouring work was "the occupation of the Mexican," who apparently showed "an indifference to physical hardships and a supreme satisfaction in doing the menial."[907]

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[904] David Starr Jordan, "The Japanese Problem in California", *LS*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (March 1907), pp. 225-229.

[905] In 1930, 97,000 Mexicans lived in Los Angeles and 167,000 in Los Angeles County, by far the largest minority group in the city. Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, p. 77.

[906] Kazin, "The Great Exception Revisited", p. 390.

[907] Quotation in William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and The Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), p. 38.

Representations of contented Mexican labour served an important function in the promotion of Los Angeles, helping to negate the emergence of a modern Mexican working class in a city sold for its homogenous and republican qualities. As William Deverell shows, Los Angeles boosters sought to control the city's Mexican presence – both literally and figuratively – by linking Mexicans with a pre-modern past, epitomised in *La Fiesta de Los Angeles*: an annual parade through the city first organised in 1894 which was "probably…the largest gathering [of people] in Southern California history to date" that "appropriated, enviously, celebratory aspects of regional Mexican culture for commercial and boosterish purposes".[908] Converting Los Angeles' Spanish "history" into a parade day which generated revenue and publicity for the city, boosters encouraged whites Angelinos to live out fantasies of Latin leisure even as they disenfranchised contemporary Mexicans from the city's future.[909] Where many Mexicans actually lived, "Sonoratown," was thus excluded from the images of the "typical" Los Angeles street, and became instead an exotic reminder "that here half a century ago another civilisation existed."[910] Urban modernity was solely to be found in Anglo-American neighbourhoods. The Southern Pacific's Passenger Company explained that the region "possesses the most modern and active of cities and some quaint and sleepy Spanish pueblos."[911]

Separation between Anglo-Americans and ethnic and racial minorities in Los Angeles was reinforced by the city's spatial expansion. As Los Angeles grew out from the old Spanish plaza, white settlers opted for new residential districts which were too

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[908] Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe*, p. 61.

[909] Lummis, "La Fiesta de Los Angeles", *LS*, Vol. 4, No. 6. (May 1896), p. 271.

[910] *California, South of Tehachapi*, pp. 9-11.

[911] Ibid, p. 5.

expensive for, or closed to, Mexican and other non-white migrants.[912] Spence observed the beginning of this shift in 1891, "In former days the principal part of the city was about the old plaza, upon which the Pico house and Mission fronted, and now in close proximity to Chinatown; but the city of to-day seems to be reaching out toward the sea; its suburbs being many miles to the south and west, containing fine avenues, magnificent residences, and many public parks that are fast becoming places of great beauty and interest."[913] The suburbs were often priced beyond the scope of ethnic and racial minorities who were "left to settle the eastern fringe" of the city and areas close to the Plaza.[914] Los Angeles' new subdivisions were thus realistically portrayed as exclusive districts for Anglo-American settlers. As Lummis wrote, "Barbed wire would not keep out undesirable classes, but the price of land will – $300 an acre is as tall a fence as is needed around any community."[915] Gardened suburbs connected by the growing network of roads and transits and inhabited by white home-owners became *the* Los Angeles of booster literature, obscuring ethnic ghettos in the "old town". Thus there was "no huddling of people in the residence parts of the city".[916] Los Angeles was "a standing riddle to the cooped East".[917]

With its distinctive spatial and socioeconomic developments, Los Angeles was sold through a unique urban lifestyle awaiting Anglo-Americans (and supported by their release

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[912] George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 63-86.

[913] Spence, "Los Angeles", *Californian*, p. 1.

[914] Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican-American*, pp. 72-77.

[915] Lummis, *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (August 1895), p. 135.

[916] *California, South of Tehachapi*, p. 11.

[917] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den," *LS*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (July 1897), p. 69.

from "coarse" labour). Promoters constructed a vision of urban leisure which, as Robert Fogelson writes, engaged with a "profound change in American values" relating to different "conclusions about the purpose of life….from those held by earlier generations." This included a "waning of the agrarian myth and the Protestant ethic" as middle-class Americans increasingly "wanted to relax as well as to labour and to find personal fulfilment rather than economic opportunity."[918] Los Angeles promoters targeted an older, wealthier class of Americans who were considering Southern California for its leisure and lifestyle attractions rather than "labour" opportunities.[919] "No other city in the Union has so large percentage of residents who are not in active business," Lummis noted in 1895; "who brought money with them, or live upon an income from elsewhere."[920] The lifestyle possibilities of the semi-tropical city thus came to the fore, shaping ideas of personal contentment and urban leisure which had origins in the winter tourism promotion of earlier decades.

For Los Angeles promoters, Eastern Americans – in spite of all their material progress – had not yet learned how to be happy. By inhabiting a semi-tropical city, however, they could learn to "enjoy life," not least because "a fiesta is so logical a thing to a decent climate".[921] Worthwhile living, like citrus, was shown to be a natural product of the climate, since "home life in Southern California" enabled residents to relax in their own

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[918] Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, pp. 70-72.

[919] See Lawrence Culver, *The Frontier of Leisure: Southern California and the Shaping of Modern America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[920] Lummis, "Los Angeles, the Metropolis of the Southwest", *LS*, p. 48.

[921] "La Fiesta de Los Angeles", *LS*, p. 261.

"lawn and semi-tropic garden". [922] In a clean, semi-tropical city, Anglo-Americans were free to live more for pleasure than graft. In Los Angeles, Charles Frederick Holder thus wrote, "new people are being moulded from old stock".[923]

This formation narrative was astutely posed by Charles Dudley Warner in an 1896 article entitled "Race and Climate," which expressed the lifestyle implications of urban growth in Southern California.[924] The co-author with Mark Twain of the *Gilded Age* – a best-selling 1873 novel which satirised the greed and corruption of modern America – Warner had by the 1890s become a renowned travel writer.[925] According to his editor, he was "the dean of American magazine writers," a man who "commands an audience, whatever he writes," and one "especially fitted to speak in a literary way on the influence of climate on man, for he…knows the facts of practically all the Lands of the Sun."[926] By referring to "all the Lands of the Sun," the writer made clear how Americans continued to view Southern California (as they did Florida) as part of a climatic spectrum which stretched beyond national borders. Most "lands of the sun," however, were equated with non-white races, individual enervation, and social instability – an issue which formed the thrust of Warner's article. He thus queried whether "a white man, and particularly an Anglo-Saxon white man," could thrive in Southern California's semi-tropical climate.

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[922] Charles Frederick Holder, "Home Life in Southern California", *LS*, Vol. 7, No. 6 (November 1897), p. 260.

[923] Ibid, p. 262.

[924] Warner, "Race and Climate", *LS*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (February 1896), p. 103.

[925] Charles Dudley Warner and Mark Twain, *The Gilded Age: A Tale of Today* (Hartford: American Publishing Co., 1873).

[926] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (January 1896), p. 87.

Would they, as a race, flourish and progress civilisation further – released from the restrictions of traditional colder climates – or become enervated by it, lazy, resembling "inferior" Latin races? In short, "Is it necessary to freeze and thaw a man, alternately, in order to get the best out of him?"[927]

The query carried huge socio-political significance. Warner wrote that in "tropical islands" like Barbados, Martinique, and Haiti, where the white man "is always thawed to the point of perspiration," whites had "no rights which the black man is bound to respect". In fact, under a tropical sun the white man was made to feel he "belongs to an inferior race" and "has not energy enough to resist this prevailing impression". The climate performed a kind of racial inversion unimaginable in colder regions, sapping the "energy" of whites and elevating blacks, who, although "lazy, as he commonly is," remained "vigorous and prolific" in spite of the heat. The concern, in regard to the future of Southern California, was obvious. "The evolution of civilisation has not been on the lines of least climatic resistance, but rather in conflict with a nature apparently hostile…at least to ease and comfort. This is especially true of what we call the Anglo-Saxon strain, which is the dominant force in the United States," but one which "has never attempted to establish itself on any large scale in the tropics, and we have no evidence of what it might do there."[928]

In Southern California, however, racial hierarchy would not be undermined by the environment: the region was both semi-tropical and fit for Anglo-Americans. "The climate is described as semi-tropical," Warner wrote, "but it is not enervating, and is more stimulating then any other semi-tropical climate I am acquainted with." Climatic

[927] Warner, "Race and Climate", *LS*, p. 103.

[928] Ibid, pp. 103-104.

imperatives were thus blurred, bringing into question the type of society and lifestyle that would develop there. For Warner, the Spanish in California had produced a civilisation "conducive to the enjoyment of life" but which contributed little to the "energetic progress of the world". Now, "we have there a substantially Anglo-Saxon race, a settlement largely recruited from climatic conditions much more severe and extreme…, and thrown into a climatic region that produced the sort of happy-go-lucky, *manana* condition in which the country was under Mexican rule and influence." Would this growing Anglo-American population "hold their northern vigour and enterprise," "follow the example of the former occupiers, the Spanish Americans," and become as listless as semi-tropical "natives," or "strike out for themselves a middle and a better way than either?"[929]

A seasoned critic of the material excesses of industrial America, Warner found with the latter, "middle" way, and thus expressed the booster ideal of a distinctive lifestyle in Los Angeles. Asserting that "Anglo-Saxon vitality" was "sufficient to cope not only in this but in succeeding generations," Warner also expected that the climate would "modify the intensity and the direction of these energies" and produce white Americans who were less materialistic and business-driven and more capable of enjoying life. In the region's parks and gardens, Anglo-Americans could imbibe a semi-tropical contentment to soften their material drives. This did not mean "to sink into indolence, or to be in any degree thriftless," but, rather, "a country which shall be reasonably prosperous, not without energy, industrially and intellectually, and yet not have the restlessness of some others I know". Semi-tropical California "ought rather to add something to the grace of life, the ease of

[929] Warner, "Race and Climate", p. 104.

living, and to the enjoyment of existence, without impairing any desirable quality."[930] Through this evolution, the region would not only "raise the best fruit in the world in abundance to supply a continent" but also "have a people as beautiful as their fruit… so that it can justly be said, 'by their fruits ye shall know them'."[931] Warner's vision of semi-tropical California as the culmination of America's pursuit of happiness had staying power: his article was reprinted in full in a 1917 edition of *Out West*, for which the editor wrote with approval, "twenty years should afford sufficient time to verify or contradict the hypothesis set forth."[932]

The editor's confidence perhaps reflected the rapid development of Los Angeles by World War I. The city's population grew from 102,000 in 1900 to 319,000 in 1910 to 577,000 in 1920, surpassing San Francisco as California's biggest city. By 1930, Los Angeles had swelled to 440 square miles – by some margin, the most extensive American city (New York was second at 299 miles).[933] Los Angeles County, a 1924 chamber of commerce pamphlet stated, contained "over 4,444 miles of improved roads connecting mountain and ocean and winding through beautiful valleys filled with orange groves."[934] The promotional visions of a renewing urban environment were inextricable from its population and spatial growth. "Climate has exerted a profound influence upon the destinies of mankind," boosters declared, and in Los Angeles supported architecture,

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[930] Warner, "Race and Climate", p. 104.

[931] Ibid, p. 104.

[932] Ibid reprinted in *Out West*, Vol. 1, No. 45 (February 1917), p. 38.

[933] Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier*, p. 139.

[934] *Los Angeles County, California: What To See & How To See It* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1924), np [UCLA].

gardens, and customs symbolic of the semi-tropics. "Suggestions of Japan, as well as India and Spain, are seen in the environs of Los Angeles," read the caption to a photograph of suburban bungalow homes, while boosters hailed the city as a "blending of the two…great civilisations" – the colder Northern strain which "worships the process of producing rather than enjoying the product" and the warmer Southern one which meant the "joy of living".[935] The growth of the film industry in Los Angeles added another layer to the promotional imagery. By 1915 there were sixty motion picture studios in Southern California, producing 75 per cent of the nation's movie negatives.[936] While the films indelibly associated Los Angeles with a glamorous, affluent lifestyle, the location of the industry promoted the region's unique status. "No wonder that Los Angeles has become 'Capital of the Moving-Picture World'," Lummis wrote in 1915. "Not only can the firm operators work here all the year round; they can 'stage' Palestine, Italy, Colorado, Egypt, or almost any temperate or tropic land."[937]

His insight was telling. For its promoters as well as its film-makers, Los Angeles was an American city "staged" in a semi-tropical setting. This incorporated how many whites viewed the Mexican population in their midst: as foreign interlopers left over from a previous civilisation. By the time Mexican immigrants began to arrive in significant numbers into the city in the 1900s and 1910s, Los Angeles had been successfully recast by its promoters as a thoroughly Anglo-American city. F. Weber Benton, in a guide printed for

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[935] Woehlke, "Los Angeles – Homeland", *Sunset*, p. 16.

[936] *California Development Board Monthly Bulletin* (San Francisco: California Development Board, June, 1915), np [SFPL].

[937] Charles F. Lummis (ed.), *The Mentor: Southern California, the Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 4, No. 21 (December 15, 1916), p. 4 [CHS].

the 1915 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, thus wrote that Los Angeles "originally…was inhabited only by Mexicans and aboriginal Indians, but the onward march of immigration and progress brought to its confines men and money from the eastern states, until now this class of desirable citizens is so multitudinous that the original and foreign element is very little in evidence."[938] Los Angeles had transformed racially and spatially into city which combined semi-tropical living and Anglo-American progress. The "original" element had thus become the "foreign" and Los Angeles was "famed the world over for its magnificent blocks and palatial homes, together with its semi-tropical verdure in tree, flower, shrub, and fruit."[939]

Miami, Semi-Tropical Florida

Throughout the Progressive Era Miami emulated and differed from Los Angeles – cultivating similar images of urban leisure while being considerably smaller and more reliant on winter tourism for its development. In that sense, the two cities reflected their regions. Like Southern California, Florida became increasingly urbanised but remained, by some distance, behind the Pacific State in this regard. In 1910, Florida's largest cities were Jacksonville (57,700), Tampa (37,800), Pensacola (23,000), and Key West (19,900) – the compound total less than half the population of Los Angeles alone – while Miami was home to only 5,500 residents.[940] In comparison with Southern California, peninsular

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[938] F. Weber Benton, *Semi-Tropic California: the Garden of the World* (Los Angeles: Benton, 1914), p. 42 [CSL].

[939] Ibid, p. 42.

[940] Nathan Mayo [Commissioner, Bureau of Immigration], *Florida, An Advancing State, 1907 – 1917 – 1927: An Industrial Survey* (Tallahassee: Florida Legislature, 1928), p. 316 [FSU].

Florida's urban growth was slight – at the least, on a kind of time lag, some twenty or thirty years behind.[941] Accepting this temporal gap, however, city growth was of increasing importance in Florida, too, rising from 10 per cent of the state population in 1880 to over a third by 1920:

Fig. 5.4 – Table of Florida Population Statistics, Urban and Rural (1870-1920)

Year	Florida Population	Urban Population	Rural Population	% Urban	% Rural
1870	187,748	15,275	172,473	8.1	91.9
1880	269,493	26,947	242,546	10.0	90.0
1890	391,422	77,358	314,064	19.8	80.2
1900	528,542	107,031	421,511	20.3	79.7
1910	752,619	219,080	533,539	29.1	70.9
1920	968,470	353,515	614,955	36.5	63.5

Historical Statistics of the United States – Millennial Edition – Vol. 1 – Population (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 1-192.

The population of Dade County, meanwhile, shot up from 861 in 1890 to 4,955 in 1900 to 42,753 by 1920, with the majority of settlers living in and around Miami.[942]

Although promoted as the urban apotheosis of semi-tropical Florida, Miami was hardly representative of cities across the state, which were characterised by their diversity. Nevin O. Winter's 1918 state guide summed up neatly the contrasting reputations of some of Florida's prominent cities. In the panhandle, Tallahassee, the small state capital, was the "chief city of the state in slave-holding times," an Old South town distinct in character and

[941] Miami's population in 1930 was roughly equivalent to that of Los Angeles in 1900.

[942] *The Fifth Census of the State of Florida, taken in the Year 1925* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Agriculture, 1926), pp. 16-17 [UCF].

history from newer cities in the peninsula. Jacksonville was "the metropolis of Florida," a manufacturing city, and the "gateway" to the peninsula, with the majority of incoming trains arriving via the city. St. Augustine, once the capital of Spanish Florida, was romanticised by promoters in a manner reminiscent of Los Angeles: as a Latin relic where the American visitor felt "that he has been suddenly transferred into some half-forgotten city of the long ago". At the tip of the state, Key West was an isolated port, closely tied to Cuba in trade and customs, as were neighbourhoods in Tampa, where developed a thriving cigar industry and large Cuban population. Tampa also grew into the commercial centre of Florida's Gulf Coast and a popular destination for home-seekers. "A drive out through the residence section is interesting," Winter wrote, "and one finds that Tampa is becoming a city of bungalows like the California cities." It was Miami, however, which emerged as the self-styled "Magic City" of the peninsula – distinctive not only for being "the most southerly city on the mainland of the United States," but also as Florida's answer to Los Angeles.[943]

Settlers who came to Miami in its formative years became among its leading promoters. Originally born in New York in 1845, Ethan V. Blackman was an orange grower and Methodist preacher in Lake County, Florida, in the 1880s and 1890s, who headed further south after the 1895 freeze. "When Miami was discovered," a fellow booster wrote, "he followed the course of the railroad into that sub-tropical section and grew up with the country."[944] Blackman served as editor of the *Florida East Coast Homeseeker* and

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[943] Nevin O. Winter, *Florida, the Land of Enchantment* (Boston: The Page Company, 1918), pp. 157-272 [FAU].

[944] Charles S. Emerson writing in E. V. Blackman, *Miami and Dade County, Florida: Its Settlement, Progress and Achievement* (Washington: Victor Rainbolt, 1921), pp. 96-97 [FAU].

for over twenty years managed the Dade County Fair, which advertised Miami and its surrounding agricultural potential. Possessing faith in his own proclamations, Blackman also made "little investments in Miami real estate," which provided him with a substantial income. By the 1920s, he lived in the Miami subdivision of Riverside Heights, still an active booster, journalist, and member of the city's board of trade and chamber of commerce. The latter organisation was then under the presidency of Everest George Sewell, who surpassed even Blackman as a figurehead in Miami's promotion. Born in Georgia in 1874, Sewell settled in Kissimmee before moving to Miami in 1896, where he opened the first men's furnishing store in the new city. In 1900 Sewell initiated Miami's first civic organisation, the Merchants Association, proposed its elaborate fifteenth anniversary celebrations in 1911, and, four years later, as chairman of the publicity bureau of the chamber of commerce, oversaw elaborate advertising campaigns for Miami focused on New York. "No citizen of this community has given more lavishly of his time and fine abilities to the great cause of civic advancement," a booster pamphlet gushed.[945]

Promoters like Blackman and Sewell created a mystique around Miami as an American city built out of semi-tropical wilderness through the money and vision of Henry Flagler. Prior to the railroad magnate's intervention, "It had been a long, weary Rip Van Winkle sleep that enveloped this tropical section," Blackman wrote.[946] Such sentiments echoed Southern Californian claims that Los Angeles had been "dormant" prior to Anglo development in the 1870s and 1880s – although there was an important difference in what slumber implied here. In Southern California, it fixed earlier, Spanish-Mexican ownership

[945] Blackman, *Miami and Dade County*, pp. 91-92.

[946] Ibid, p. 18.

of the land as woefully unproductive; in South Florida, it described an essentially pre-human condition, with the fitful exception of the Seminole Indians. In the eyes of boosters, Miami had been tropical wilderness, with "scarcely…a trace of civilisation" whatsoever, prior to its formal incorporation one year after the freeze inspired Flagler to extend the railroad to Biscayne Bay.[947] In the promotional lexicon, Miami thus "awakened" with the railroad and the opening of the Royal Palm Hotel, which became its social hub. "Miami, from the very beginning, has been marked with a progress unknown to any other city in the State, if not in the United States," the *Florida Homeseeker* proclaimed.[948] Selling the city's climate, tourist attractions, real estate and urban lifestyle became inseparable from Miami's identity. As F. Page Wilson, a settler there in the 1890s, later wrote, "Miami has always been a publicity-conscious city. Perhaps under its economic circumstances it was bound to be. It had to sell, not automobiles or other products, but itself, its homes and way of life."[949]

In that regard, Miami's connection to Los Angeles was profound. The "Magic City" came into being at precisely the time that Southern California boosters were beginning to promote Los Angeles as a "New Eden of the Saxon home-seeker," a city where Americans could become "re-inventors of the lost art of content".[950] The two cities shared in this vision of semi-tropical living impossible in cold, crowded, industrial metropolises. Indeed, if anything, emphases on pleasure and leisure were even more prominent in Miami, since Los Angeles possessed a broader economic base. Miami's self-imagery was an intensified

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[947] "The Year 1905 – The Prosperous East Coast", *FECH*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January 1906), p. 7.

[948] Ibid, p. 7.

[949] F. Page Wilson, "Miami: From Frontier to Metropolis: An Appraisal", *Tequesta*, No. 14 (1954), p. 34. See also F. Page Wilson, "We Choose the Sub-Tropics", *Tequesta*, No. 12 (1952), pp. 19-45.

[950] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (July 1895), p. 82.

version of the depictions of semi-tropical luxuriance used to sell coastal Florida for decades. The city, after all, was a product of Flagler's hotel and resort "empire," and for a while the terminus of a coastline increasingly referred to nationally as America's "winter playground". Like Palm Beach and West Palm Beach, Miami owed its initial promotion to thousands of pamphlets disseminated by the Florida East Coast Railway and hotel companies which described a "land where life and conditions are very different from those which obtain in the United States."[951]

Miami, however, also inherited the lingering popular concerns about living in Florida year-round. As city booster C. H. Ward wrote in 1915, "The most difficult task has been to convince the home-seeker that the summer climate is desirable."[952] Thus, initially, Miami developed into a city where the number of winter visitors exceeded the permanent population by a factor of ten or more. In 1913, for example, Miami was a city of 11,000 residents which was visited annually by approximately 125,000 tourists.[953] The city's chamber of commerce, recognising the value of attracting tides of winter visitors, eagerly promoted hotels and sporting pursuits, but it also strived to entice a larger permanent

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[951] J. D. Rahner [Florida East Coast Hotel Company], *East Coast of Florida* (St. Augustine: Florida East Coast Railway, 1901-02), p. 60 [FSU]. *The Story of a Pioneer: A Brief History of the Florida East Coast Railway and Associated Enterprises, Flagler System, 1885-6…1935-6* (St. Augustine: The Record Company, 1936), p. 27 [FIU].

[952] C. H. Ward, *The Lure of the Southland – Miami and Miami Beach, Florida* (Miami: C. H. Ward, 1915), p. 11 [UF].

[953] Raymond Mohl, "Shadows in the Sunshine: Race and Ethnicity in Miami", *Tequesta*, Vol. 49 (1989), pp. 63-81.

population. Year-round residents were seen as vital to creating a more stable citizenry, in addition to new businesses and heightened real estate prices.

To attract residents, Miami boosters, like their Los Angeles counterparts, focused on climatic benefits, an agricultural hinterland, and opportunities for a semi-tropical lifestyle.[954] In 1897, Blackman and fellow residents started the Dade County Fair, which grew into a highly-anticipated annual event displaying both human and agricultural products of South Florida. Alongside crop exhibits, boosters organised eugenically-symbolic "baby shows" where healthful white babies were put on display, celebrating the first generation of Anglo-Americans being born in the semi-tropics. "It was remarked by many of the tourists that they had never seen so many handsome babies at a baby show. This, like all the products of Dade county, is the best."[955] Growing national interest in the potential drainage of the Everglades further contributed to Miami's growth. Just as Los Angeles promoters highlighted their city's irrigated backcountry, South Florida boosters stressed how "Miami and Dade county will share the profit accruing from the increased business, trade and land values, which will inevitably follow the advent of the many new immigrants from the north" into the reclaimed lands.[956] Numerous Everglades land sales companies were based in Miami which was sold as the future metropolis of the Caribbean as well as South Florida. A few years after the Spanish-American War, the Florida East Coast Railway informed potential investors that "Miami, this new metropolis of the far

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[954] "Directing Attention to Miami", *Miami Herald* (January 3, 1912), p. 2 [UF].

[955] "The Baby Show", *FH*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (April 1907), p. 119.

[956] De Croix, *Historical, Industrial, and Commercial Data of Miami*, p. 181.

South, is the gateway….to all that wonderful region which has lately come under the protection of the American eagle."[957]

Similar to Los Angeles again, the marketing of Miami was dependent on racial and class hierarchies which boosters alternately acknowledged and obscured. While affluent whites were enticed to the city for its myriad semi-tropical attractions, thousands of Bahamian blacks also came to Miami, "attracted to South Florida by work opportunities in housing and railroad construction, the citrus and vegetable industries, and service jobs in tourist hotels and restaurants."[958] By 1920, nearly 5,000 Bahamians lived in Miami – half of the city's black population and almost a sixth of Miami's total.[959] Promoters invariably stressed the lifestyle opportunities for whites only, however. "The East Coast of Florida has the ideal climate for the white man," F. J. De Croix of the Miami Chamber of Commerce wrote, moreover depicting the city's growth as the singular result of Anglo-American effort, given that fifteen years ago the area "known as the wild East Coast" "boasted of no white man's ingenuity or science".[960] The city had subsequently been made into a beautiful "white city" – a reference to its architectural style which also unwittingly expressed the booster's racial vision.[961]

Sold for its whiteness but home also to blacks, Miami was a product of the Jim Crow South. Across Florida, most African Americans had ceased voting within a decade of the state's 1885 constitutional amendments which created a poll tax and other measures

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[957] Rahner, *East Coast of Florida*, pp. 66-67.

[958] Raymond Mohl, "Shadows in the Sunshine", pp. 66-67.

[959] Ibid, p. 67.

[960] De Croix, *Historical, Industrial, and Commercial Data of Miami*, p. 30.

[961] Ibid, p. 24.

designed to disenfranchise blacks.[962] Concurrent with the voting restrictions, physical and legal segregation of the races in public transport, civic spaces, and housing expanded into the 1890s, with the 1896 Supreme Court ruling of "separate but equal" in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* giving legal sanction to this system known as "Jim Crow". The construction and promotion of Miami developed in the years following the pivotal Supreme Court ruling, thus making Jim Crow part of Miami's foundations. In the early twentieth century, African Americans in the city were legally restricted from living in white neighbourhoods but they had been excluded, in practice, since Miami's origins.[963] As was the case in other Florida towns, black neighbourhoods were anything but equal in housing, schools, or health-care.[964] As Wali Kharif writes, "Wherever it was located black housing was often inadequate," with most African Americans unable to afford to buy or construct their own homes and forced to pay high rents charged by white absentee property owners. Much of the available housing for blacks in Miami "was substandard by every definition. Some [African Americans] lived in run-down shanties and shacks," which looked nothing like the "typical" Miami homes of booster literature.[965]

Miami's impoverished black neighbourhood, "Coloured Town," was excluded from promotional guidebooks not least because it undermined statements that the city "has built

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[962] Michael Perman, *Struggle For Mastery: Disfranchisement in the South, 1888-1908* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), pp. 258-259.

[963] Wali R. Kharif, "Black Reaction to Segregation and Discrimination in Post-Reconstruction Florida", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (October 1985), pp. 169-170.

[964] Dorothy Jenkins Fields, "Tracing Overtown's Vernacular Architecture", *Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 23 (1998), pp. 322-334.

[965] Kharif, "Black Reaction", pp. 170-171.

up a solid, loyal, homogenous people, united in one object, that of not only building a city beautiful in material things, but one in which education and culture are encouraged".[966] The latter sentiments were by, for, and about, the white population of Miami. Promoters thus described "the residential district" of Miami as "miles of bungalows, cottages, and palatial residences," and disregarded the crowded housing of Coloured Town.[967] An extensive 1921 guide to Miami by Blackman even made no mention of the city's black population whatsoever.[968] Yet the booster visions of white leisure and progressive development did not entirely erase the city's African American population. Rather, they fixed blacks within roles which implicitly acknowledged and sanitised the connection between the subjugated African American population and the leisure-filled existences and urban progress boosters depicted for whites.[969] A photograph from a 1920s civic guide, for example, beneath a modern aerial view of the city, showed "the Beginning of Miami in 1896": a group of suited white men – including E. G. Sewell – stood in front of a number of African American men, with the latter holding wheelbarrows and shovels and engaged in the physical work of clearing Biscayne Bay. Exposing the colonialist attitude of promoters, the caption made a critical distinction between these two parties based on race: the whites were "a group of pioneer settlers" whereas the blacks were "a gang of workmen" which was "soon increased by hundreds". The classic American quality of pioneer settlement was thus attributed exclusively to the Anglo founders of Miami, whereas the city's African

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[966] De Croix, *Historical, Industrial, and Commercial Data of Miami*, p. 18.

[967] Ward, *Lure of the Southland*, p. 7.

[968] Blackman, *Miami and Dade County*.

[969] For the "selling" of segregation by Southern boosters, see Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Random House, 1999), pp. 138-151.

American residents (who were as much pioneers and settlers as the whites) were reduced to a specifically manual labour contribution.[970]

Images of marginalised black workers fed into the ideal of Miami as different from industrial cities which were supposedly being crowded with politically-powerful immigrant groups. Miami, like Los Angeles, was thus said to be free from "the foreign element which is flocking, in large numbers, to our shores and obtaining control of the Northern cities".[971] Instead Miami's "foreign element" – African Americans as well as Bahamian blacks – were subjected to legal and extralegal codes which ensured white supremacy. A Bahamian migrant to the city who recalled the racist treatment and dilapidated housing he experienced there thus wrote, "Coloured Miami certainly was not the Miami of which I heard. It was a filthy backyard to the Magic City."[972] For many white Northerners, however, the hardening of racial control under Jim Crow also made Florida a more appealing prospect. Boosters reproduced a 1903 *Chicago Times-Herald* article which clumsily stated, "The people understand also that the negro problem, if not settled, is in progress of settlement, and that it is at least no longer a source of irritation. Hence that barrier is thrown down and there is no deterrent cause to bar the overflow of humanity from the busier and more active hives of the world [to move south]".[973] Stable racial divisions – separating Anglo-American leisure from African American labour – characterised the urban visions of Miami. The 1904

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[970] Frank B. Shutts, *Florida, 'The East Coast': Its Builders, Resources, Industries, Town and City Developments* (Miami: Miami Herald, 1926), p. 8 [FAU].

[971] A. R. Moore, "The Peerless One", *Florida Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (February 1909), p. 78. [USF]

[972] Ira Reid quoted in Mohl, "Shadows in the Sunshine", p. 68.

[973] "Emigration to the South", *Chicago Times-Herald*, reproduced in *Florida Agriculturist*, Vol. 30, No. 17 (April 22, 1903), p. 254.

Florida State Immigration guide thus stated, "Social equality between the races is not tolerated, and is impossible; miscegenation is prohibited by law, and the gulf that marks the social boundary between the white race and the black, is as broad as the universe, and as fathomless as the infinitudes of space. Yet, the relationship between the races is of the most kindly and friendly order."[974]

Envisaged as a semi-tropical city for Anglo-American civilisation, Miami's boosters increasingly made explicit comparisons with Los Angeles in their promotion. The tendency of Floridians looking to California was nothing new, of course. In 1909, the state's leading citrus growers formed a cooperative, the Florida Citrus Exchange, which sought to improve distribution of their fruits by basing its model on the California Fruit Growers' Exchange. Florida growers brought in experts from California to ensure that their Exchange followed "as closely as practicable the lines of the organisation of the California Fruit Exchange, which is one of the most successful organisations of its kind in this country."[975] West Coast boosters also impressed Floridians.[976] In the 1900s, the California Promotion Committee – a state-wide umbrella group for local chambers of commerce –

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[974] B. E. McLin [Commissioner, Department of Agriculture], *Florida – A Pamphlet Descriptive of Its History, Topography, Climate, Soil, Resources, and Natural Advantages, in General and by Counties – Prepared in the Interest of Immigration* (Tallahassee: T. B. Hilson, 1904), p. 277 [UF].

[975] M. S. Burbank, "The Florida Citrus Exchange", *Everglade Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June 1911), p. 8. [UF]. Into the 1920s Florida agricultural boosters continued to look to California for methods of improving the growing and marketing of their crops: see Frank Parker Stockbridge & John Holliday Perry, *Florida in the Making* (New York: The de Bower Publishing Co., 1926), pp. 75-89 [UCF].

[976] Brother Powell in *St. Petersburg Times*, reprinted in "Powell is Anxious to Know", *FECH*, Vol. 9, No. 9 (September 1907), p. 290. See, also, "Why Advertising Pays", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 10 (November 1910), p. 426.

urged citizens to contribute to advertising campaigns since "time, energy, money and system are required to make a city beautiful. Well ordered streets, clean yards, attractive buildings and homes are all conducive to a more satisfied feeling on the part of residents, and are inducements to visitors to locate."[977] The Committee reported that California "has more Chambers of Commerce, development organizations and promotion associations than any other State."[978] With California serving as a promotional model for Florida, Los Angeles assumed an identical role for Miami.

The latter's periodicals and promoters frequently linked the pair, running headlines such as "Miami Destined to Become Los Angeles of Eastern U.S." and "Miami's Future Brighter than Los Angeles".[979] These optimistic claims indicated the success of Los Angeles and its boosters. By 1910, with Miami home to 5,500 people, Los Angeles had expanded to a population of nearly 320,000 and symbolised a desired future for Miami boosters, who wrote that "it is pleasant to have travellers see a resemblance between Miami and Los Angeles – there is no doubt that the Magic City has a citizenry, also, which is planning to build for the future."[980] Occasionally envy spilled over in these comparisons and Miamians cited death rates to suggest that their city was healthier than Los Angeles or

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[977] *Two Circulars of the California Promotion Committee* (June 28, 1905), np [LC].

[978] Ibid, np.

[979] "Miami Destined to Become Los Angeles of Eastern U.S.", *Miami Metropolis* (February 10, 1910), p. 8. "Miami's Future Brighter than Los Angeles", *Miami Metropolis* (March 27, 1914), p. 1. See, also, Miami – A Los Angeles", *Miami Metropolis* (December 13, 1912), p. 4. "Miami, the Los Angeles of the East", *Miami Metropolis* (January 6, 1920), p. 10.

[980] "Miami – A Los Angeles", *Miami Metropolis* (December 13, 1912), p. 4.

building statistics which showed faster rates of construction in South Florida.[981] Yet the disparity in size meant that, in general, Los Angeles figured as a target to reach rather than a rival to beat. In 1912, the *Miami Metropolis* thus quoted Mr. D. C. Caddagan, a new resident of Miami who had previously lived in Los Angeles, who stated, "The similarity of conditions surrounding the two cities has set me to contrasting them" – including their agricultural hinterlands, climates, and harbours – with the conclusion that "if Los Angeles could grow to a population of 400,000 in fifteen years Miami can and will do the same and more."[982] The city's boosters took direct lessons from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. The president of the Miami Board of Trade, Isidor Cohen, travelled to Los Angeles in 1912 and reported back "the profusion of flowers" in that city as an "asset" which should be matched in Miami; so was the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce building, which showed off "exhibits of all kinds" from the county to visitors.[983] "Miami," Cohen concluded, "could do well indeed to emulate California in this and several other respects."[984] Miami's winter visitors and new residents also affirmed the "resemblance" between the two cities. Erstwhile Populist spokesman and presidential candidate, William

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[981] "More Building, Fewer Deaths Here than on Pacific Coast", *Miami Metropolis* (September 18, 1915), p. 1.

[982] "500,000 in Few Years for Miami – New Resident of this City Compares South Florida Metropolis with Los Angeles, California", *Miami Metropolis* (November 15, 1912), p. 6.

[983] Isidor Cohen [President of Miami Board of Trade] quoted in "Brings Good Advice from Section of Big Boosters", *Miami Metropolis* (June 14, 1912), p. 3.

[984] Ibid, p. 3.

Jennings Bryan, after coming to the city to give a lecture and then purchasing a home there in 1912, thus declared that "Miami will be the Los Angeles of Florida."[985]

The spatial characteristics of Miami were quite different from those of Los Angeles, however. While the latter grew into a vast, open city of suburbs, Miami hugged the coastline and remained relatively compact up to the 1920s. City boosters stressed improvements in urban transportation with bus services, a trolley system, and better sidewalks; in 1914 alone, twelve miles of concrete sidewalk were built within the city limits.[986] The downtown sector, however, was surrounded on three sides by the Miami River and Biscayne Bay, and after a quarter-century the city covered just fifteen square miles.[987] With a rising population, Miami thus became "by the 1920s one of the nation's most congested cities" in terms of traffic.[988] Such notable physical differences did not, however, prohibit Miami boosters from looking to California. Instead the spatial expansion of Los Angeles made for a useful guide for their own potential civic growth. Although the headline ran "Miami's Resources Unparalleled," a 1915 story in the *Miami Metropolis* typified how parallels with Los Angeles pervaded the city's self-imagery. "Miami has 20,000 people at the present time…Many visitors characterise it as the Los Angeles of the

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[985] William Jennings Bryan quoted in "Prominent Educators Forecast Miami Future", *Miami Metropolis* (February 24, 1916), p. 4. Adam G. Adams, "Some Pre-Boom Developers of Dade County", *Tequesta*, Vol. 17 (1957), p. 37.

[986] "Miami's Resources Unparalleled" in *Florida Farmer and Homeseeker* (1915) reprinted in *Miami Metropolis* (June 25, 1915), p. 6. Ward, *Lure of the Southland*, p. 7

[987] Frank B. Sessa, "Miami on the Eve of the Boom: 1923", *Tequesta*, Vol. 11 (1951), p. 6.

[988] Paul S. George, "Traffic Control in Early Miami", *Tequesta*, Vol. 37 (1977), p. 3.

southeast and it does not seem at all improbable that Miami's population will exceed 100,000 within a few years."[989]

Miami's commercial growth was cited by promoters as a clear signifier of its urban improvement. For boosters, progress was thus found in the assessed valuations of real estate and improvements which rose from $120,000 in 1897, to $820,000 in 1905, to $12,259,400, in 1915, with corresponding population increases from 480 to 4,733 to 15,592 those same years.[990] The "sleeping" city was evolving into an American marketplace. Miami, E. A. Waddell wrote, boasted "as many modern improvements as can be found in any city four times its age in the United States," proving that "we have…an up-to-date, go-ahead class of people".[991] The material development was used to assuage any persisting Northern fears about supposed tropical lethargy. George Chapin, a promotional-historian of the area, thus wrote in a 1914 text, "That such a city can and does exist in the tropical portion of Florida will give the world a new conception of the energy that is building up the most southern of all the states. It will emphasise the fact that higher temperatures do not dull the edge of thrift nor reduce physical and mental activities."[992]

If the "tropical" climate did not, in fact, dull the characteristic "thrift" of Anglo-Americans, however, it did create an improved urban lifestyle, Miami promoters asserted. Older and wealthier white Americans were sold Miami (as they were Los Angeles) as the

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[989] "Miami's Resources Unparalleled" in *Florida Farmer and Homeseeker* (1915) reprinted in *Miami Metropolis* (June 25, 1915), p. 6.

[990] *The First Thirty Years of Miami and the Bank of Bay Biscayne, 1896-1926* (Miami: Bank of Bay Biscayne, 1926), p. 24 [FAU].

[991] E. A. Waddell, "Miami City and County", *FECH*, Vol.12, No. 4 (April 1910), p. 138.

[992] Chapin, *Florida*, p. 501.

perfect city for a comfortable, semi-retired life which allied modern amenities with semi-tropical nature. "Miami is drawing to itself thousands of the better class of American citizens, men and women of education and character, thus building a citizenship made up of the very cream of population from nearly all of the states in the Union," C. H. Ward wrote. "People who have made their wealth elsewhere are seeking Miami in ever-increasing numbers for either a winter or a permanent home."[993] With accumulated wealth a major factor in the city's development, so was the broad shift from producer to consumer conceptions of American identity. As a Miami resident later wrote of its growth, "A contributing factor no doubt lies in the changed attitude of many classes of our people. The long rough work of subduing a continent about completed, they turned more and more to the joys of a fuller, freer, more natural life in the open."[994] This superior lifestyle further cast Miami as a replica of Los Angeles, along with the emergence of a film industry in Florida – in Jacksonville, Tampa, and Miami – which encouraged hopes that the Southern state might rival Southern California as the motion picture capital of America.[995] In architecture, too, Miami mimicked Los Angeles, with faux-Mediterranean themes in housing. Real estate developers showed off homes surrounded by vegetation – symbols of the urban independence of Semi-Tropical America:

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[993] Ward, *Lure of the Southland*, p. 35.

[994] Wilson, "Miami: From Frontier to Metropolis", p. 26.

[995] Richard Alan Nelson, "Palm Trees, Public Relations, and Promoters", *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (April 1983), pp. 383-402.

Fig. 5.5 – *Some of Miami's Bungalows and Apartments* picture (1921) [UF][996]

Focusing on the city's lifestyle as much as its economic opportunities, Miami boosters sold "an out-of-door life the year round [which] makes the city one of the greatest

[996] Photographs of "Some of Miami's Bungalows and Apartments," in Earl Royce Dumont, *Miami* (Miami: Montray Corporation, 1921), np [UF].

ports for the pleasure-loving element".[997] In 1915 E. G. Sewell of the chamber of commerce thus set about advertising Miami throughout the North for its winter climate and sporting attractions, including the placing of a large electric sign at Forty-Second Street and Broadway in New York, informing "the shivering New Yorkers in January that it is 'June in Miami'".[998] The chamber of commerce initiated "a nationwide public relations campaign which eventually made Miami the best advertised community in the South".[999] Promotional pamphlet married Miami's semi-tropical environment to its lifestyle benefits. A 1917 chamber of commerce guide thus featured a lively but leisure-filled ocean-side scene of Anglo men and women walking, driving, and returning from the tennis courts, surrounded by a modern technological cornucopia of automobiles, steamships, aeroplanes, and luxuriant hotel, but also in the midst of tropical palms, one of which dominated the image's foreground. Confirming the uniqueness of their city, the text explained that Miami was "the epitome of the charm and lure of the Southland," which "perches, gem-like, on the finger which Florida dips so daintily into the blue southern waters, clothed in the romance and mystery of the tropics."[1000] Thus placing American modernity amid tropical nature, Miami's sellers epitomised the South Florida vision that "no other region, in any part of the world, can show so happy a blending of the joy of life with the business energy that creates material progress and modern civilisation."[1001]

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[997] Dr Croix, *Historical, Industrial, and Commercial Data of Miami*, p. 20.

[998] Victor Rainbolt, *The Town That Climate Built: The Story of the Rise of a City in the American Tropics* (Miami: Parker Art Printing Association, n.d.), p. 35 [UF].

[999] Nelson, "Palm Trees, Public Relations, and Promoters," p. 384.

[1000] *Miami, the Land of Palms and Sunshine* (Miami: Miami Chamber of Commerce, 1917), np [UM].

[1001] Herbert N. Casson, "The New Florida", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (March 1910), p. 80.

The booster imagery of evolved urban living was articulated by William F. Blackman, president of Rollins College in Winter Park, in a 1903 address which was reprinted in the *Florida Homeseeker*, after the publication's editor invited Blackman to "come to Miami and see…what was being accomplished [there]".[1002] Like Charles Dudley Warner in Southern California, Blackman saw semi-tropical Florida as the future site for a well-rounded Anglo-American civilisation. Northerners, he chided, were still erroneously disturbed at the prospect of living near the tropics. "It is generally thought that a continuous residence in this warm country makes men lazy and shiftless, and that no one can make great achievements surrounded with tropical or sub-tropical conditions." The rapid growth and construction of Miami, however, was testament to the fallacy of this idea. Blackman dismissed those fears that "in the tropics, and at their verge, men will only dream and loiter," and pointed to the ancient civilisations of the Mediterranean, where "human life" was "splendid and fruitful". However, he declared, perhaps a softening of the fierce pace of American life was no bad thing. "Doubtless there is here, beneath a more vertical sun – and ought to be – some slackening of speed in the race of life; but then, we have more days, and longer, every year, in which to do our work than our Northern neighbours have, as well as a more responsive Nature to work upon." Furthermore, in a statement which would have seemed sacrilegious to most Yankees only a few decades before, Blackman boasted of South Florida's potential to create new Americans defined by the enjoyment of life rather than the virtues of hard graft. "Is it so certain that speed and struggle are better than safety and sanity, that labour is more sacred than is leisure?" His message, echoed by countless Miami boosters, was that the free labour model of American character was no longer

[1002] "President W. F. Blackman's Address", *FECH*, Vol. 5, No. 5 (May 1903), p. 5.

dominant or even necessary – and certainly not in a semi-tropical city. There, Americans were learning to seek out leisure and contentment as much as they persevered after economic accumulation. "What if it be true," he concluded, "that the vocation of this Southland is, in part, to temper the consuming ambition of the North, to steady and flavour and enrich and recuperate our American life in these days of unexampled strain after wealth and power?"[1003]

The promotional visions of Miami as a recuperative site for "American life," ironically, contributed to its rapid transformation from semi-tropical wilderness to a city of rising "wealth and power". Home to only several families in 1895, Miami by 1920 had a permanent population of 30,000 which was augmented during the winter season by a transient group of over a hundred thousand.[1004] "Climate, location and a progressive citizenship," E. V. Blackman wrote, "have made Miami the wonder and admiration of the world."[1005] Residents inhabited a city of "long rows of up-to-date business blocks," "palatial homes," and "magnificent hotels and apartments," and were said to experience a more contented lifestyle than in the North.[1006] A real estate company explained, "A metropolis, such as is New York City, is not the kind of metropolis Miami wants to be" – a city "packing buildings together like sardines in a box, and crowding apartments and streets with millions of people representing every nationality," which "would mean…sacrificing to commercialism everything that makes Miami the most comfortable and the most delightful

[1003] "President W. F. Blackman's Address", p. 5.

[1004] Blackman, *Miami and Dade County*, pp. 22-23.

[1005] Ibid, pp. 22-23.

[1006] Ibid, pp. 22-23.

community in the world".[1007] Instead the "kind of metropolis Miami wants to be" was like Los Angeles: a community of independent white urban-dwellers which "happily combines business aggressiveness and progressiveness with a wholesome appreciation of what it means to be a community to have beautiful homes, surrounded by ample space, decorated with tropical shrubbery, flower and vegetable gardens, palm and fruit trees…to have wide, clean, dustless streets and roadways, lined with buildings that harmonise architecturally…to have the citizenship of home-loving, intelligent, progressive, honourable people."[1008] These republican communities were enabled by racial separations which distinguished Miami, like Los Angeles, as a semi-tropical city for white Americans. A visitor thus wrote in 1920 how Miami was "destined to be the great city of Florida and of that section of the country, ultimately being to that region what Los Angeles is to Southern California, to which its growth and characteristics are very similar."[1009]

Conclusion

Promoters of Southern California and South Florida in the Progressive Era fashioned visions of Los Angeles and Miami as new cities which were distinctive from unstable urban environments in the North and Midwest associated with industrial factories and un-assimilating immigrants. For boosters, semi-tropicality and Anglo-American enterprise combined to produce unparalleled cities which were neither crowded nor debilitating but healthful and progressive. These cities were conducive to a happier, outdoor lifestyle

[1007] Dumont, *Miami*, np.

[1008] Ibid, np.

[1009] "Florida and Miami as Others See Them", *Miami Metropolis* (July 28, 1920), p. 4.

through which Anglo residents could continue to foster material and social progress in their semi-tropical states.

Los Angeles was the older and greater of the two cities in terms of population, economy, and space. Sold by an active chamber of commerce, the city expanded into one of the most spatially extensive in America, with new industries based upon oil and film supporting a diversified economy. In 1899, when Miami was formally three years old, Los Angeles had swelled to 108,000 people and was confidently boosted as a unique semi-tropical city. A guide prepared for the annual meeting of the National Educational Association in Los Angeles thus described "a busy place, and handsome withal" – a "metropolis whose *ensemble* is thoroughly modern. The business push, so unexpected in a semi-tropical climate, reminds one of Chicago. But not alone is Trade worshiped, as embodied in steel-framed structures, electric cars, asphalt pavements, and huge piles of wares. The Beautiful also finds ample expression," in the flower-lined streets and neighbourhoods, the cottages and gardens which contained "tropical plants that shame into bashfulness the pampered beauties of an Eastern hothouse".[1010] Booster visions of semi-tropical urbanisation fuelled the growth of Los Angeles into a city of half a million residents by 1920.

Reflecting the longstanding semi-tropical links between the two regions, Miami boosters saw in Los Angeles a symbol for their own city's future. Miami lacked Los Angeles' impressive spatial expansion and was more reliant on winter tourism; in 1920, the city was home to just 30,000 year-round residents. Yet its boosters recognised tourism as a legitimate means of attracting permanent citizens. As a city guide explained, "Those who

[1010] W. H. Simpson, *Where to Go in California* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1899), p. 26 [SFPL].

once visit it continue to do so, bring others and ultimately settle there, building their own homes."[1011] Miami boosters depicted a fecund locale for urban living which paid off in growing American interest in the city. The 1920s thus saw Los Angeles and Miami become the two most publicised cities in America and sites of fast-growing economies and real estate booms.[1012] Miami's promoters played a critical role in bringing thousands of Americans into South Florida, advertising the city nationally and through the local "spectacle" of outdoor events, real estate fairs, and a glamorous social scene, and continuing to make comparisons with Los Angeles.[1013] For the first time, Miami's promotional campaigns and success sparked a significant response from Los Angeles, where promoters acknowledged the "keen competition from Florida" and formed the All Year Club of Southern California as a leading booster organisation.[1014] In 1925, a Los Angeles consulting firm thus called for "a campaign which will at least cause the public to give California as much consideration as it does Florida".[1015]

Reminiscent of Los Angeles' boom of the mid-1880s, however, Miami's real estate boom collapsed under inflated prices and the financial bust damaged the city's

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[1011] *Miami, Florida: The Magic City* (Miami, 1920s), p. 1 [FAU].

[1012] Tom Zimmerman, "Paradise Promoted: Boosterism and the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce", *California History*, Vol. 64 (Winter 1985), pp. 24-26. Charles D. Fox, *The Truth about Florida* (New York: Charles Renard Corporation, 1925) [UF].

[1013] Bush, "Playground of the USA", pp. 153-172.

[1014] Fogelson, *Fragmented Metropolis*, p. 74.

[1015] Eberle and Riggleman's Economic Service, *Weekly Letter* (September 7, 1925), quoted in Deverell, Hise and Sloane, "Orange Empires: Comparing Miami and Los Angeles", pp. 147-148.

reputation.[1016] Frustrated South Florida boosters responded to American scepticism about South Florida by referring to Southern California's earlier experiences: "Only recently similar forecasts were being broadcast of the ultimate fate of Los Angeles and all southern California."[1017] The *Los Angeles Times* even sent "well wishes to the Everglades State," explaining that not only did the two states share a "semi-tropical climate" but that Florida's boom-and-bust had been "matched here" and eventually led onto "steady development".[1018] Thus in the fallout of real estate speculation, Miami promoters found solace yet again in pointing to their semi-tropical rival. A 1926 guide declared, "The experience of Los Angeles will be more than duplicated in the growth of Miami."[1019]

Sold as ideal cities for Anglo-American living, Los Angeles and Miami represented culminations of the selling visions of Southern California and peninsular Florida as semi-tropical lands. Like those broader visions, the urban imagery merged "republican" ideals of homogeneous, home-owning communities with "colonialist" divisions based on race and class. Indeed, the one depended on the other. *De facto* and *de jure* policies of employment and housing segregation between the races underpinned the selling of semi-tropical cities for white Americans. The urban visions relied upon the presence of politically, economically, and socially marginalised ethnic and racial minorities – Mexicans in Los Angeles and African Americans in Miami – who filled manual labour positions which supported the prosperity and leisure of affluent white citizens. Boosters thus played a

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[1016] Elliott Mackle, "Two Way Stretch: Some Dichotomies in the Advertising of Florida as the Boom Collapsed", *Tequesta*, Vol. 33 (1973), pp. 17-29.

[1017] Stockbridge, *Florida in the Making*, p. 286.

[1018] "Florida Boom Matched Here", *Los Angeles Times* (February 14, 1926), p. 16.

[1019] Shutts, *Florida, 'The East Coast'*, p. 16.

leading role in naturalising these racial stratifications within optimistic visions of city development. "Progress" was understood in terms of suburban neighbourhoods of citizens who had left behind troubling urban centres in the North and Midwest for new environments which elevated the American pursuit of happiness. Miami was "A City in the American Tropics" and "Playground of the Tropics," and Los Angeles a metropolis where "we Americans are becoming an outdoor people".[1020] The once-strange environments of the semi-tropics now presented Anglo-Americans with redemptive cities of gardened independence where urbanisation meant not decay but rebirth. Charles F. Lummis thus wrote of Southern California, "Cities will accrete – though never vast and feverish ones…They will be 'just cities' – only prettier; as a flower garden is prettier than a stone heap."[1021] Thirty years later, Florida promoter Arthur Brisbane envisaged in the two states beautiful urban spaces that "will not be cities of crowded windy streets, but cities that will cover hundreds of square miles, spreading over hills and valleys, [and] with beautiful roads." In a day to come, "Those now living will see in California and in Florida, cities greater than any now on earth."[1022]

[1020] Rainbolt, *The Town That Climate Built.* Shutts, *Florida, 'the east coast'*, p. 89. Edgar Lloyd Hamilton, *Los Angeles: A Miracle City* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1928), p. 20 [UCLA].

[1021] Lummis, "The Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 3 No. 3 (August 1895), p. 135.

[1022] Arthur Brisbane, quoted in (ed.) Nathan Mayo [Commissioner of Agriculture], *Florida's Resources and Inducements – Eighteenth Biennial Report, Part 1, 1923-24* (Tallahassee: T. J. Appleyard, 1924), p. 61 [UF].

Conclusion

Between 1869 and 1919, Southern California and peninsular Florida were transformed from undesired "wastes" at the fringes of the continent to among America's most prized destinations: sites of dramatic growth fuelled by agricultural, tourism and urban promotion. Over that period, California's population increased from 560,247 to 3,426,861, including an impressive southerly shift – from fewer than 50,000 residents in 1880 (5% of the state population), Southern California was home to 2.8 million people by 1930 (or half of the state's total).[1023] Home to 187,748 residents in 1870, meanwhile, Florida approximated California's proportional population increase of nearly 600 per cent in rising to 968,470 by 1920; a further aggregation of a half million people in the next decade spurred a guide to declare, **"**Florida is being overwhelmed with a great wave of outside people who appreciate its possibilities and who will build up just as they have done in California, another empire."[1024]

If this writer unwittingly conceded that California had outdone Florida in preceding decades – by then, Los Angeles was the fifth-largest city in America and its county was the richest producer of farm crops across the country – he also demonstrated the intimate connections between the pair which had been cultivated by their boosters.[1025] Existing beyond statistical measurements, these links clustered around visions of Southern

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[1023] James Gregory, "The Shaping of California History", in Sucheng Chan & Spencer Olin (eds.), *Major Problems in California History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), p. 20.

[1024] *Orange County, Florida* (n.p., 1926), p. 3 [UCF].

[1025] *Los Angeles County, California: What To See & How To See It* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1924), np [UCLA].

California and Florida as fertile locales distinctive from the North and Midwest, where industrialisation, agricultural decline and class conflict were increasingly inescapable facets of American society. In widely-disseminated representations of California and Florida, the "outside" Americans of those colder, industrial regions were promised individual renewal – through winter tourism, agricultural prosperity, and suburban living – and a broader social evolution. California and Florida were thus recast and sold as semi-tropical homelands of new and evolved American communities.

Promoters infused into these visions of Semi-Tropical America both republican and colonialist discourses of development. As boosters played upon Euro-American fascination with tropical regions as sources of untapped riches and pre-modern living, they made a critical distinction: these semi-tropical lands would be dominated by the white race and progressive society which many believed to be impossible in "torrid," racially-polyglot tropical countries. Anglo-controlled destinies formed a consistent thread in the selling of both states. Referring to frequent comparisons made by visitors between Southern California and Palestine, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce thus stated, "Unlike Palestine, however, Southern California is not a melancholy reminder of its former greatness, but a centre of active, aggressive American enterprise; a region in which the best thought and energy of the American people are finding their crowning development, under the most genial clime in which the Anglo-Saxon race ever wooed the favours of Mother Earth."[1026] Similarly, a 1918 guidebook by Nevin O. Winter explained how Florida had "first lured the red man from the more inhospitable North and he was followed by the white

[1026] Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce quoted in Atchison & Eshelman (Historians, Etc.), *Los Angeles, Then and Now* (Los Angeles: Geo Rice & Sons, 1897), p. 52 [UCLA].

man," after which "Latin contended with Latin for its mastery, and, in turn, with the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-American."[1027]

Narrating Anglo expansion into semi-tropical climes, land and tourism promoters strived to commodify in their texts the racial heterogeneity of California and Florida. This involved a delicate balancing act, as economic dependence on Native Americans, Asians, Mexicans and African Americans as vital workers coexisted with booster desires for a growing Anglo-American population. In a period of nationwide social dislocation, promoters thus focused on stable hierarchies in which cheap, "docile," marginalised non-white labourers supported the tourism, agricultural and urban improvements which were critical to economic growth. Racial labour became embedded in the booster imagery, such as a 1912 handout by the *Los Angeles Morning Herald* which included a piece entitled "Epic of the Land of the Sun!" Riding the transcontinental train, the fictional narrator spent "all these days and nights" anticipating California, until, on arrival, the state "refreshed [his] eyes, too long deadened by the heat and dust of the interminable deserts," with one of the first sights being "a barefooted Mexican labourer at work in a black furrow"; shortly thereafter, "dark-skinned Spanish, bare-footed, [and] dressed like vagabonds" came "through the train with baskets of luscious oranges" on sale for the American travellers.[1028] The links between race and manual work were often more explicit. "Unskilled labour is supplied generally by negro help, and is secured locally," a 1920s industrial guide to Florida stated. "The demand for orchard workers is largely supplied by residents of the

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[1027] Nevin O. Winter, *Florida, the Land of Enchantment* (Boston: The Page Company, 1918), p. v [FAU].

[1028] *Southern California, the Land of Heart's Desire: Its People, Homes, and Pleasures, Art and Architecture* (Los Angeles: *Morning Herald*, 1912), p. 26 [UCLA].

negro race."[1029] Far from being an alternative to the rest of the nation, California and Florida thus perpetuated the same patterns of racial domination and submission. For incoming whites, racially and economically stratified societies became inseparable from the emergence of progressive semi-tropical lands for Anglo-Americans.

As a descriptive term, "semi-tropical" gradually fell out of use in the 1920s. It was still employed occasionally, to be sure: a golf enthusiast in the *New York Times* in 1923, for example, reported that "California leads the semi-tropical States with thirty-eight links. Florida has thirty-five," while in 1937 O. O. McIntyre declared in the same newspaper that "I believe semi-tropical countries are most ideal for writing. Such as Florida and California."[1030] Yet the terminology became scarcer in the historical record, a far cry from the pervasive fixture it had been in booster imagery in earlier decades. This diminution reflected fundamental changes in the promotional literature and in the two states themselves. By the 1920s, considerably greater public knowledge of Southern California and peninsular Florida existed and a corresponding shift occurred in the nature of the promotional literature. Boosters no longer felt it necessary to provide the broad, "educative" climatic, geographical and environmental descriptions of the kind which had found particular value in the concept of "semi-tropical" states.

Moreover, the falling away of the term revealed a thorough conquering of natural environments which had once been deemed largely uninhabitable. From being regarded as intimidating and remote cattle country into the 1870s, Southern California was such a

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[1029] Nathan Mayo [Commissioner, Bureau of Immigration], *Florida, An Advancing State, 1907 – 1917 – 1927: An Industrial Survey* (Tallahassee: Florida Legislature, 1928), p. 262 [FSU].

[1030] "Links Number 200", *New York Times* (December 18, 1923), p. 24. O.O. McIntyre, "New York Day by Day", *New York Times* (July 17, 1937), p. 4.

transformed region – physically and psychologically – that the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce could, in 1928, assert that it "furnish[ed] an unparalleled example of American energy, enterprise, vision, and cooperation."[1031] Long considered swampy morass, Florida had also become a hotbed of American capitalist development. A 1920s guide thus described how the state hosted myriad "developments which are making cities grow where nothing was, plowing [sic] gold from the wasteland, threading the unbroken wilderness with railroads and highways, re-molding coast-lines, lifting islands from the depths and crowning them with Aladdin palaces."[1032] Because industry and enterprise had effectively conquered these lands and cities were prospering in both regions, their environments were no longer a deterrent in any real sense. As environmental historians have shown, the damage done to the natural ecosystems in California and Florida in this period of transformation was immense.[1033] In getting those regions settled and flourishing, however, the semi-tropical visions had done their work. There was no further need for boosters to push the semi-tropical imagery as they had already accomplished their task of convincing Anglo-Americans to come to Southern California and Florida.

Contrary to the readings of scholars who have mistakenly marginalised this discourse, the semi-tropical imagery was thus an extremely important factor in the selling

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[1031] Edgar Lloyd Hamilton, *Los Angeles: A Miracle City* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, 1928), p. 4 [UCLA].

[1032] Frank Parker Stockbridge & John Holliday Perry, *Florida in the Making* (New York: The de Bower Publishing Co., 1926), p. 18 [UCF].

[1033] See, for example, Mark Derr, *Some Kind of Paradise: A Chronicle of Man and the Land in Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998). Ted Steinberg, *Down to Earth: Nature's Role in American History* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 176-183.

and development of California and Florida. It fundamentally reshaped American conceptions of the two states. In California, semi-tropical fruits ostensibly replaced gold-mining as the state's iconic industry: ambitious developers like Joseph P. Widney thus even imagined the division of the state in two, declaring of Southern California that "the emblem upon its seal should not be the miner's pick and the crouching bear, but the clustering grape, the orange, the olive, and the broad leaves of the banana, drooping under the warm rays of the southern sun."[1034] Eastern conceptions of California evolved in dialectic with its changes. The East, a San Francisco journalist observed in 1910, "looked upon California as a semitropical state, whose chief horticultural product was the orange and lemon."[1035] Peninsular Florida underwent a similar revolution in popular perceptions. Thus, in 1923, the Florida East Coast Railway affirmed the transformation of wilderness into a string of "beautiful, modern cities in semi-tropical settings, and smaller well-ordered communities."[1036]

One way the significance, as well as the contradictions, of the promotional imagery of semi-tropical California and Florida can be usefully gauged is in how this fed into the justification and boosting of America's tropical acquisitions in and after the 1890s. As Eric T. Love has shown, pro-expansionists in the Gilded Age faced strong opposition against the taking of tropical colonies, most fervently on the grounds that the latter were racially and socially unfit environments for American society.[1037] In California and Florida, however,

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[1034] J. P. Widney, "The Division of the State", *Californian*, Vol. 3, No. 14 (February 1881), p. 125.

[1035] "East Now Seeks California Apples", *San Francisco Call*, Vol. 104, No. 91 (August 30, 1908), p. 46.

[1036] *East Coast of Florida* (St. Augustine: Florida East Coast Railway Co., 1923), p. 1 [FAU].

[1037] Eric T. Love, *Race over Empire: Racism & U.S. Imperialism, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

national expansionists found useful symbols for the potential benefits of taking other, albeit overseas, Spanish or tropical colonies. Thus John L. Stevens, the American minister in Hawaii, when concerned in 1892 about the growing importation of Japanese workers there which he saw as a precursor to Japan taking control, pointed to California as a model for how the federal government could annex and "Americanise the islands". In a cable to Secretary of State John Foster, Stevens wrote that America should take ownership of Hawaii and then offer "small lots for…[American] settlers and freeholders," enabling the "permanent preponderance of a population and civilisation which will make the islands like southern California," thereby "bringing everything here into harmony with American life and prosperity."[1038]

This pointed comparison between America's continental "semi-tropical" states and potential overseas colonies was made frequently after the Spanish-American War, as pro-expansionists defended the new tropical possessions in terms of a natural continuation of American growth which had earlier claimed (among other lands) California and Florida. Guides to the new possessions borrowed liberally from the language that had been applied to Florida and California earlier in the century. A prolific author on America's 1898 acquisitions, Trumbull White thus wrote, "The Philippines, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Hawaii, all by moral right and manifest destiny are the noble fruits of victory and the rising power

[1038] John L. Stevens [U.S. Minister in Hawaii] letter to Secretary of State John Foster, quoted in Eric Love, "White is the Colour of Empire: The Annexation of Hawaii in 1898", in James T. Campbell, Matthew Pratt Guterl & Robert G. Lee (eds.), *Race, Nation, & Empire in American History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 81.

of the great American commonwealth."[1039] As with former continental "waste places," the key to promotion seemed to require recasting these tropical colonies as fundamentally changed by Anglo-American rule – a triumph of race over environment. "Tho Honolulu is a tropical town in every respect," John Musick wrote in a treatise on Hawaii, "it is impossible for one to be on shore an hour without realising that, after all, the controlling forces in this wonderful land are not tropical but American."[1040] Hawaii's attractions sounded eerily reminiscent of Florida and Southern California a few decades earlier. Indeed, the writer repeated word for word Edward King's 1874 description of Florida: "This is the Kanaka life in the land of sunshine. *This is the south, slumberous, voluptuous, round, and graceful*."[1041] But California, rather than Florida, was the true inspiration for American expansionists. Republican presidential advisor Murat Halstead declared, "We [have] conquered the richest islands of the Indies, East and West, and hold them as our possessions by the same title that Texas and California are States of the Union."[1042] For those Americans queasy about an overseas empire, he cited the ongoing relevance of both the Monroe Doctrine and American expansion, stating that "Spain is losing the last of her American islands as she lost all her American continental empires." In a statement that showed California's ascendancy over Florida in the national imagination, he concluded:

[1039] Trumbull White, *Our New Possessions: A Graphic Account, Descriptive and Historical, of the Tropic Islands of the Sea Which Have Fallen Under Our Sway* (Philadelphia: Elliot, 1898), pp. 16-17 [BrL].

[1040] John R. Musick, *Hawaii…Our New Possessions* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1898), p. 8 [BrL].

[1041] Emphasis added. Ibid, p. 30

[1042] Murat Halstead, *The History of American Expansion, and the Story of Our New Possessions* (New York: The United Subscription Book Publishers of America, 1899), p. 6 [BrL].

"The example that, above all, vindicates the policy of annexation – not excepting Louisiana, Florida, or Texas – is California".[1043]

Logic underpinned this self-serving thinking. However much anti-imperialists denied continuity between earlier continental and contemporary overseas expansions, the connections were profound. While the newer "commercial" expansion (predominantly for markets) contrasted somewhat in purpose with older "landed" expansions (designed for settlement), both were draped in the legitimising language of Manifest Destiny which absorbed the subjugation of indigenous, non-white populations within American progress. Theodore Roosevelt thus mocked the anti-imperialist claims that the policy of "1899 is to destroy the fundamental principles and noblest ideals" of America on the reasonable grounds that such "doctrines condemn your forefathers and mine for ever having settled in these United States".[1044] Racial displacement was an accepted factor of renewing American expansion. Of Hawaii, a writer explained, "Society is too often measured by the native standard; but it would be as reasonable to measure the society of America by the North American Indian, as to make the native the standard of Honolulu society."[1045] For Halstead, tropical expansion was the logical step forward for a matured republic: "That consolidation which we call nationality, and which, with guarantees of popular liberty in republicanism and democracy, has in it the enduring and dominating substance of imperialism, that

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[1043] Halstead, *The History of American Expansion*, pp. 8-9, 25.

[1044] Quotation from "The American Anti-Imperialist League Denounces U.S. Policy, 1899" in Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman and Jon Gjerde (eds.), *Major Problems in American History, Vol. 2: Since 1865* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007), p. 92. Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, in Ibid, pp. 90-91.

[1045] Musick, *Hawaii*, p. 29.

overcomes and expands and constructs and goes on to greater destinies."[1046] Americans should thus take pride in "the mighty magic of our fortune that transforms all that becomes ours. It was so with Louisiana, California, and the rest. It will be so with Cuba and Hawaii."[1047]

Furthermore, American fascination with tropical and semi-tropical productivity had been whetted by the successes of California and Florida. Long before 1898, promoters of those states had cultivated and played upon Anglo desires for expansion into semi-tropical Spanish "latitudes". By the turn of the century, the pair – although not links in some inevitable chain – stood as symbols of American development of semi-tropical nature. California promoters especially acknowledged this. Professor of Horticulture at the University of California E. J. Wickson thus wrote in 1898 "that it was in California first of all that the American mind came into contact with arid, semitropical conditions," and how it was "surprising with what rapidity American insight reversed the Spanish conception of the value and adaptations of the country, and American energy and ingenuity made practical and profitable use of them."[1048] Such statements reinforced the conceptual link, made by Halstead and other expansionists, between formerly-Spanish continental lands which had been "improved" by white Americans and overseas islands such as Cuba where a similar model could take place.[1049] Indeed, an 1899 pamphlet by the California State

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[1046] Halstead, *The History of American Expansion*, p. 24.

[1047] Ibid, p. 8.

[1048] E. J. Wickson [Professor of Agricultural Practice in the University of California], "Distinctive Features of California Horticulture", in *California, Early History…* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1898), p. 53 [CSL].

[1049] White, *Our New Possessions*, p. 492.

Board of Trade declared, "Because the Spanish occupants [of California] were inert it has been supposed that the climate is enervating and conduces to sloth and idleness. The habits of the Spaniard are no criterion for the wide-awake, alert American," since "the Spaniard has hung along the latitudes of the tropics for so many centuries that it would take many generations to breed out his natural inertia."[1050] Given the pervasive booster narratives of "American energy" making "practical and profitable use" of semi-tropical California and Florida, the acquisition of tropical islands in 1898 represented less an aberration than a culmination of ideological currents in late-nineteenth century America.[1051]

Yet, in spite of these links being a form of flattery for their states, some California and Florida boosters bitterly criticised America's tropical expansion. They did so because of vested interests (since the new colonies would produce similar crops), racial objections to "absorbing" tropical peoples, as well as "moral" opposition to overseas imperialism. Charles F. Lummis provides a good example. For Lummis, Halstead's logic amounted to a kind of heresy: an historical misreading of republican expansion as imperial conquest. In Southern California's leading magazine, *Land of Sunshine*, Lummis thus railed against America's imperialist ventures for all of the above reasons, writing in 1896 that the Cuban rebellion consisted of "negroes" who were the "worst elements in the island, led by a few

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[1050] Gen. N. P. Chipman [President and Chairman of the Committee on Industrial Resources for the Year 1899], *California…Its Resources and Advantages – Tenth Annual Report* (San Francisco: California State Board of Trade, 1900), p. 44 [SFPL].

[1051] The scholarship on U.S. overseas expansion in the 1890s is vast and rich with debate. For a useful discussion, see the introduction to LaFeber, *The New Empire*.

abler men of as noble motives as [labour unionist Eugene] Debs."[1052] After the Spanish-American War he warned that "the Imperial Trend" potentially meant "[T]he sacrifice of California," since "we cannot keep out nor fine the products of our new 'possessions', which raise the same things that California does," nor "shut subjects of the United States, as we can – and have been obliged to – the alien Chinese."[1053] Tellingly, Lummis envisioned a strict dichotomy between the "healthy" agriculture of California and the coerced industries which must develop in the tropical colonies: the California "men who have farms, fruit ranches, sugar-beet fields, garden homes" would then be ruined by the "cheap products of Hawaii, Porto Rico and the Philippines," with the latter raised by "coolies".[1054] This distinction ignored the labour and racial realities emerging in California's semi-tropical agriculture. Yet it also served an important function in the selling of Semi-Tropical America, working to further "Americanise" California within the popular imagination. Blinding faith in continental republicanism was critical to the visions of Southern California and Florida as democratic home-lands rather than imperialistic societies. "Jefferson Expansion was to get room for American settlers; McKinley Imperialism is to make room for a few speculators," Lummis charged in 1900.[1055]

Boosters of Southern California and peninsular Florida thus marked out their states as the semi-tropical edges of American republicanism and Anglo society, beyond which the social and racial "climates" became increasingly murky. In this period, the two states were

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[1052] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *Land of Sunshine*, Vol. 4, No. 5 (April 1896), p. 237. [Hereafter cited as *LS*]

[1053] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (February 1900), pp. 192-193.

[1054] Ibid, pp. 192-193.

[1055] Lummis, "They Mistake Their Audience", *LS*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (September-October, 1900), p. 295.

successfully recast into sites of American progress, against which the tropics continued to appear remote and primitive. In 1910, South Florida booster John Gifford thus chided "the native of the tropics" as "a lover of leisure," who did little more than "rest…content in his palm-thatched hut amid his beloved bananas".[1056] But such representations only exposed again the underlying connections between the selling of California and Florida and later American drives for commercial and territorial expansion in the tropics. Gifford's language was virtually identical to that applied to Mexicans in California and African Americans in Florida during the post-Civil War decades. The difference was that Anglo-Americans were now considered the dominant "natives" of California and Florida, who had, moreover, earned the right to "love leisure" having introduced enterprising development to the semi-tropical states.

Ironically, however, while boosters clearly distinguished between their states and actual tropics, ties to Latin America and the Caribbean – and support for American *commercial* expansion into tropical regions – became more prominent themes in California and Florida promotion. Imperialist reservations did not prevent Anglo capitalists from sensing profits in tropical expansion: shortly after the Spanish-American War, Florida railroad magnate Henry Flagler invested in a new 360-mile railroad in Cuba, which also attracted the venture capital of Southern Pacific railroad owner, E. H. Harriman.[1057] Investment boosters in California and Florida, meanwhile, increasingly highlighted opportunities the tropics provided for Anglo developers, with Los Angeles and Miami

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[1056] John Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays relating to Southern Florida* (Kansas City: Everglades Land Sales Co., 1911), p. 39 [UF].

[1057] Fredrick B. Pike, *The United States and Latin America: Myths and Stereotypes of Civilisation and Nature* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), p. 166.

promoted as the commercial bases for American capitalists looking to Latin America. As Southern California booster Harry Ellington Brook wrote in 1901, "It is not difficult to foresee a time when Los Angeles may become headquarters for Americans investments" in "the Spanish-American countries between the United States line and the Isthmus."[1058] Costa Rica, for example, offered tropical real estate at "absurdly low" prices "in proportion to the value of the products," while the "natives" – a "simple, kindly people, who are satisfied with little" – would "under American overseers…make good labourers" at only 50 to 75 cents per day. From their base in Los Angeles, American capitalists could thus initiate "a peaceful conquest of that section" of "Tropic America".[1059] Southward expansion was similarly endorsed by Stanford University President David Starr Jordan in *Sunset* magazine in 1899, when he envisaged "the peaceful invasion of Mexico" through the "spread of American ideas" and "American capital," the "ultimate result" of which would be "to change Mexico from a paternal despotism to a self-governing republic" – such that, in one hundred years, it would be "an Anglo-Saxon republic instead of a Spanish one."[1060] Not to be outdone, Florida was sold as "the natural gateway to the West Indies," since "the great peninsula, like a huge finger, directs the way to fertile regions beyond, awaiting American capital and enterprise."[1061]

Once considered chronically remote from the "energetic" centres of American trade and development, semi-tropical California and Florida thus came to the fore as fortuitously-

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[1058] Harry Ellington Brook, "In Tropic America", *LS*, Vol. 15, No. 6 (December 1901), p. 507.

[1059] Ibid, pp. 508-511.

[1060] David Starr Jordan, "Mexico – A New Nation in an Old Country", *Sunset*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (March 1899), pp. 83-87.

[1061] Gifford, *The Everglades and other essays*, p. 20.

located states for the untapped resources of Latin America. The Panama Canal was eagerly supported by promoters in both states who recognised the wealth and investment boons to be garnered from its construction. For Florida, the *Miami Herald* declared, the contemporaneous building of an overseas railroad south from Miami to Key West, completed in 1912, would "connect this country with the islands of the sea and [convey] the great traffic from the Panama".[1062] Boosters stressed the commercial potential of Miami as a vital city in a coming "union of North and South America in a confederacy of commerce," in which once-peripheral Florida would become "a great central state".[1063] In 1915 California promoters organised two massive expositions to commemorate the Panama Canal; held in San Francisco and San Diego, the fairs focused on its beneficial consequences for their already "peerless land". Published for the San Diego Exposition, the guidebook *Semi-Tropic California* thus directed the attention of "the American pioneer" to Central and South America as "the world of new opportunity". Racial stereotypes supported the vision of tropical commercial expansion. Although Latin Americans "will not work like people of northern lands," they "are most happy in making others happy," and the natural resources of their countries promised lucrative dividends for the more energetic "North American" developer. Southern California thus served as a stable stepping-stone to rich but undeveloped Latin countries which had not experienced its social or racial transformation. As the guide espoused, "Considering the fact that but a comparatively few years ago, this was the home almost exclusively of Mexicans and Indians, the social conditions of Southern California will compare favourably with any locality on this

[1062] "Directing Attention to Miami", *Miami Herald* (January 3, 1912), p. 2.

[1063] Herbert N. Casson, "The New Florida", *FECH*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (March 1910), p. 89.

continent, while the educational advantages….are undoubtedly much superior to many of the older states."[1064]

The key to these favourable "social conditions" lay in population and control. For boosters, the arrival of Anglo-Americans into California and Florida had produced the social and material benefits of a "self-governing republic" alongside exotic natural attractions. No longer disdained as forbidding environments, the semi-tropical corners of the nation had thus become superior American societies in which hierarchies of race and class were entrenched and would play a critical role in future developments. In later decades, the connections to Latin America saw Mexican and Afro-Caribbean immigrants arrive in greater numbers into Southern California and peninsular Florida, respectively, filling low-paid roles as migratory agricultural workers and segregated urban dwellers. The promotional imagery of semi-tropical California and Florida, however, had long before made space for colonialist realities of racial stratification within uplifting visions of republican societies home to American independent and progressive living. Capturing the booster ideal of Semi-Tropical America, Charles F. Lummis thus wrote of Anglo settlers coming to Southern California, "They find it not only the most independent but the most fascinating home-life in the world…It has something of kingship – and the most virulent republican approves of a monarchy when he can be the monarch."[1065]

[1064] F. Weber Benton, *Semi-Tropic California: the Garden of the World* (Los Angeles: Benton, 1914), pp. 17, 52 [CSL].

[1065] Lummis, "In the Lion's Den", *LS*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (August 1895), p. 135.

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